TRUE WEST

October, 1963 35¢

CUSTER!

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See Page 14 about the cover painting

Also in this issue:

FRED GIPSON
J. FRANK DOBIE
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23 FEATURES!

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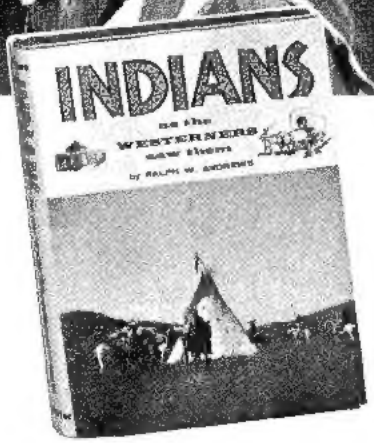
Left, Lone Bear, a Sioux (U. of Wyo. photo); Above, Mormon family and prairie cabin (Union Pacific Railroad photo).



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Left, Sioux graves —dead are "buried" on poles (W. H. Over Museum).

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Right, Hu-ni-wa-la-nist, or Feathered Wolf, Cheyenne. (Smithsonian photo)

Below, manuscripts on desk of Judge E. S. Ricker (Neb. State Historical Society).

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Below, covered wagon train, 1882 (Union Pacific Railroad photo).

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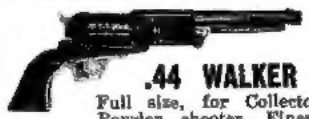

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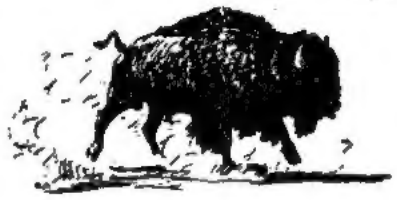

September-October, 1963
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Whole No. 59

True West

All True—All Fact—Stories of the Real West

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Editor

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Circulation Manager

DR. WALTER P. WEBB
Historical Consultant

"The files of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES are going to be of great historical value and should be preserved in all the libraries of the country."—Walter Prescott Webb, former President, American Historical Association.

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A "SMALL" PUBLICATION

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The Quality of Courage

The following editorial appeared in the September FRONTIER TIMES. For the benefit of Dr. Webb's friends among TRUE WEST readers who might have missed that issue, we are reprinting our tribute to this great Westerner.

WHEN Dr. Walter Prescott Webb was killed in an automobile accident recently, every person who had ever met him seemed to have a compulsion to write or say something in tribute that would befit the passing of such a tremendous person. I had that strong feeling at first —it gradually changed into a sense of utter inadequacy. How can anyone express his esteem for a man who not only had one of the greatest minds the world has ever known, but who had qualities that would have made him great even with an average mind.

In the first place, Dr. Webb would not have wanted me to write a learned, brilliant tribute to him as a man or a scholar. In the second place, I couldn't do it—it wouldn't seem appropriate even if I were capable.

When I read "The Search for William E. Hines," it stirred me so that I became a little too eloquent in my praise for it and, even though he was proud of that piece of writing, he brushed my remarks aside lightly and started talking about something else. Praise actually embarrassed him.

My greatest happiness with Dr. Webb was like the time he called and said he was terribly lonesome. We all get lonely, and that's when you need a friend most. I told him to come on over and we would drive down to the lake. At that time, I had a house trailer parked in a beautiful little cove on Lake Austin.

We didn't go inside. We just sat on the ground, Indian style, and talked until the damp and chill became uncomfortable. Still reluctant to end our visit, we built a little fire and talked until after dark. I have never heard such things come out of a man's mind in my life. He was in the mood to talk—about anything and everything. You asked him a question and the answer came out so forcefully right, simple and clear that there was no possible arguing the wisdom of his statements.

I asked him why a man could fight for a cause all his life and, finally, for no seemingly apparent reason, things would start opening up. He told me in two words —and they are *so* true—"accumulative effort." (In my particular case, a great deal of that effort was his.)

When we got back to my house that night, he left the motor running but we kept talking at considerable length. By that time, he was actually in a jovial mood. His occasional sarcasm could be cutting when he was grumpy, but his quips were priceless when he felt like making them.

Still a little awed by all the knowledge and insight I had been exposed to that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon, I foolishly asked, "Why should a man of your stature and with a mind like yours be able to receive a lift from talking with an average person like me for several hours?"

You could always tell when Dr. Webb was ready. He rared back in his seat, looked straight ahead and said, "Well, Joe, *anybody* would get a lift after comparing notes with a mind like yours for four or five hours!" Then he slapped his thigh, held back his head, and laughed until his face, neck and bald head became a brilliant red!

I could tell stories for hours—little gems about his wit as a member of our poker circle, experiences on various trips with this man, and his periodic visits to the office with a brand new idea that would help TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES—*always* ending with Dr. Webb's standing at the door, hat in hand, and saying, "Joe, the idea was just a damned excuse—I just wanted to visit with you awhile."

He was the most honest man I have ever known, or ever expect to know. Also, the most realistic. If I were to continue reminiscing, getting more nostalgic as I go, I am afraid his very spirit would grab this manuscript, tear it apart, and say, "Joe, go on with your work—you've got two magazines to put out."

He loved the magazines. He took an early and very active interest in our ideas and ideals, and was of tremendous help in actually pushing us along toward our goal. Just two weeks before he was killed, Dr. Webb said to me, "Joe, I believe these magazines are going to be more successful than you and I ever dreamed. Even if they are not, I think you have already proven something to national publishers as a whole—that success can be made of a *clean, truthful* magazine. With the sex, sensationalism and utter filth that we have on our newsstands today, I would say that you have made a success whether or not you are ever a rich man!"

Dr. Walter Prescott Webb

FOLLOWING is the first article Dr. Webb wrote for us. It may give you a very *tiny* look into the way his mind reasoned.

THE QUALITY OF COURAGE

The readers of TRUE WEST must be people who admire courage, whether it is exhibited by the bad man or the good man. The Old West of which so many like to read was filled with brave men. Some of them were good and some were bad; some within the law and some without. But the good man and the bad man by western standards had one quality in common, and that was courage, bravery, intrepidity. It is really this quality that we admire and like to read about, whether it was exhibited by Wyatt Earp upholding the law or Jesse James or Sam Bass or some other breaking it.

In writing the history of the Texas Rangers, I had the opportunity of studying the action of as courageous a group of men as ever trod the western plains. Again and again I came upon the record of such Rangers as Jack Hays, Ben McCulloch, L. H. McNelly, John Armstrong, John B. Jones and Frank Hamer, to mention a few examples of men who had courage in the highest degree. I followed them as they met the Indians, the outlaws, the bandits and the murderers of Texas. Some of their deeds are incredible, and difficult for the average person to understand.

After poring over these records, extending back a hundred years and more, I began to ask: What is this quality of courage? What did these men have that I and most others do not? How is it that they could walk into danger with the calm that an ordinary person would enter a drug store? What is the quality these men have that most others do not?

Then I came up with an answer that is as curious as it is unexpected. I decided that these men *lack* a quality that most people have. Instead of having something—in this case, courage—that most lack, they lack something that nearly everybody has. They lack fear. It has been, in a few cases, left out of their composition. Their courage is not a positive quality that has been added, but a negative quality that has been omitted. Fear has been given to all animals as a protection, and they survive because of it. They run away from danger and thereby avoid destruction. So do most people, whether they admit it or not. But there are exceptions, a few men who are *fearless*—utterly without fear.

In the gunfighting days of the Old West such men had a great advantage. They were not bothered by fear when they went into a fight. They did not have to put it down because it was never there. Therefore they could be as cool and collected, as intelligent in a gun battle as they were in any other transaction. All of their wits were about them, their minds were free to concentrate on the business in hand, and their muscles were relaxed so that they could receive and execute the orders from the brain. Their hands remained steady, they took time to catch the sight before they pulled the trigger, and they had the ability to be alert to everything that was going on around them. This lack of nervousness, this coolness and deliberateness, gave them a big advantage over an opponent who had to fight his fear and his enemy at the same time. The man without fear has nothing to do but fight his enemy. It has been said that some of these men smile

(Continued on page 42)

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True Western

Scene of Tragedy

Dear Sir:

Here is a picture of a covered bridge I have ridden over many times by stagecoach. It is a hundred years old and has had only one plank replaced in all these years. It is on the Centerville Road over Butte Creek where they mined for gold in the early days.

My grandmother crossed the Plains in 1854 and settled in this area. In the train was the Lewis family: Samuel, the father; May, the mother; and the children, Arenia, Jimmy and Johnny. The Lewises were living on Berry Creek when Indians captured the children on their way to school. Arenia was thirteen and was a frequent visitor at my grandmother's. On the day of their capture, the youngest, Johnny, aged five, wanted to go to school so his parents let him go.

As they were returning home that day, the little boy got thirsty and they left the road about 100 yards away. The older brother was drinking in the creek when a rifle shot rang out. He fell in the water, shot in the back. Mill Creek Indians appeared and took the other two prisoners. They were in sight of their home.

The children were barefoot and suffered a great deal from stones and brambles. When Johnny got too footsore to walk, it angered the Indians, and after talking in their own tongue, four of them took the little boy back in the woods. He seemed to realize what was going to happen and he told his sister goodbye. His body was found later stoned to death in a clump of bushes. They told Arenia they were going to burn her alive when they reached camp.

Once the girl saw a faint wagon track and heard a rooster crow. She knew she was not far from someone's house and begged them to let her go, but they refused. About noon, she was left behind with one Indian to guard her. He was loaded with provisions and guns and she pleaded for him to let her rest. At last he agreed and she managed to get away.

She ran to Big Chico Creek and hid under the bank among some willows. She could hear the Indians looking for her. Eventually they left. That little girl finally made her way to a settler's home and got back safely to her parents. She lived to be 104 years old!—Mabel Miller, P.O. Box 141, Sunol, California.

Payroll Bandits with Feathers!

Good Morning, Editor:

I have just finished the June issue of TRUE WEST and a story in it reminded me of an Army payroll robbery that took place in Clayton County, Iowa, about 1842. The payroll was enroute from Fort Crawford, Wisconsin, to the new Fort Atkinson in Iowa. A band of Indians (probably Sioux or Sac or Foxes) were in the area at the time. The Army did not make a record of the robbery—probably felt too foolish about letting the Indians get the best of them.

However, three years ago there was a young Indian in Clayton County who claimed to be a direct descendant of the Indians that pulled the robbery. The cache is supposed to be in a cave up Miners Creek near Guttenberg, Iowa, about twenty-five miles south of the "scene of the crime." Some people think that the loot was hidden on a farm now called Gold Mine Farm—hence its name. Good hunting!—Weber Dehn, Manchester, Iowa.

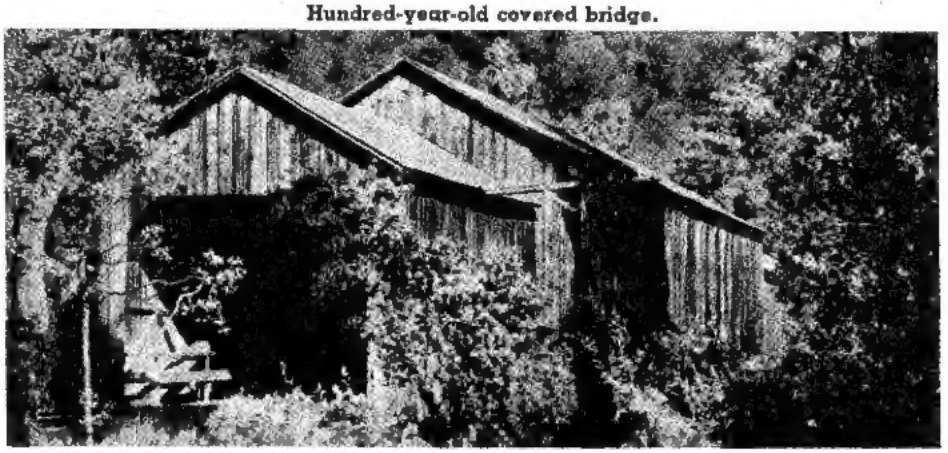
Ghost Towns

Dear Joe:

Carrying out a program of trying to preserve our ghost towns is another thing that has made your magazines great (August TRUE WEST). What we need is a national law with real teeth in it dealing with the desecration of ceme-

(Continued on page 50)

Hundred-year-old covered bridge.



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VICTORIO!

By Don Jesus Torin
as told to Jose Aceves

Did a stolen boy grow up to be a great Apache chief? The Indians say no—but here is the other side of the story. His heart was Apache, but his blood was Mexican.

IN THE SEPTEMBER FRONTIER TIMES
Now on sale at your newsstand

Also in this issue:

Big Jim Savage by Ben T. Traywick

A mountain man and harbinger of death to the Yosemite Tribe, Jim Savage was the leader of the Mariposa Battalion and the first white man to behold the breath-taking sight of the Indians' forbidden valley. He fulfilled a strange prophecy.

ROUGH AND ROARING By Milt Hinkle
A cowboy's life was a mixture of hard work and getting into devilment during those wild old days on the staked plains around the turn of the century. Ol' Uncle Milt tells of when he was a cowboy.

LAST OF THE STEAMBOAT MEN By Gary L. Roberts
Just before the Old West was gone forever, a kid on the Mississippi River, Raymond W. Thorp, looked around him and decided, "I'm going to live it, and then I'm going to write about it!" And write about it he did!

THE FIRST INDIAN MILLIONARE By Jim Clark
Jackson Barnett was an Oklahoma Indian with a problem; he just flat didn't want any of the things his million dollars would buy . . .

SHOEMAKER'S MINE By Sperry Weaver
An experienced treasure hunter gives some opinions and advice on a sixty-seven-year-old puzzler.

"PATCHY" SLAUGHTER By G. B. Farfan
Apache May was an Indian baby rescued just before her village was destroyed . . . she soon captured the heart of one of Arizona's toughest lawmen.

I FIND THE "LITTLE" TREASURES By William Mahan
In the 19th Century a man's bank was often a hole in the back yard, and sometimes he never got around to closing out his account. A professional treasure hunter assures you that there is plenty of treasure to be found, and a systematic way to go looking for it.

Plus eleven other features and the usual old, rare photographs!

COMING UP! NOVEMBER ISSUE OF FRONTIER TIMES, ON SALE SEPTEMBER 20

Our lead feature, by the noted Western historian Harry Sinclair Drago, describes the hardships and troubles of the old cattle drives. Another story is on Ben Thompson, the Yorkshire Englishman who ended up a Texas gunfighter. Plus seventeen other features on everything from Indians to treasure hunting! It's going to be a good issue. Don't miss it!

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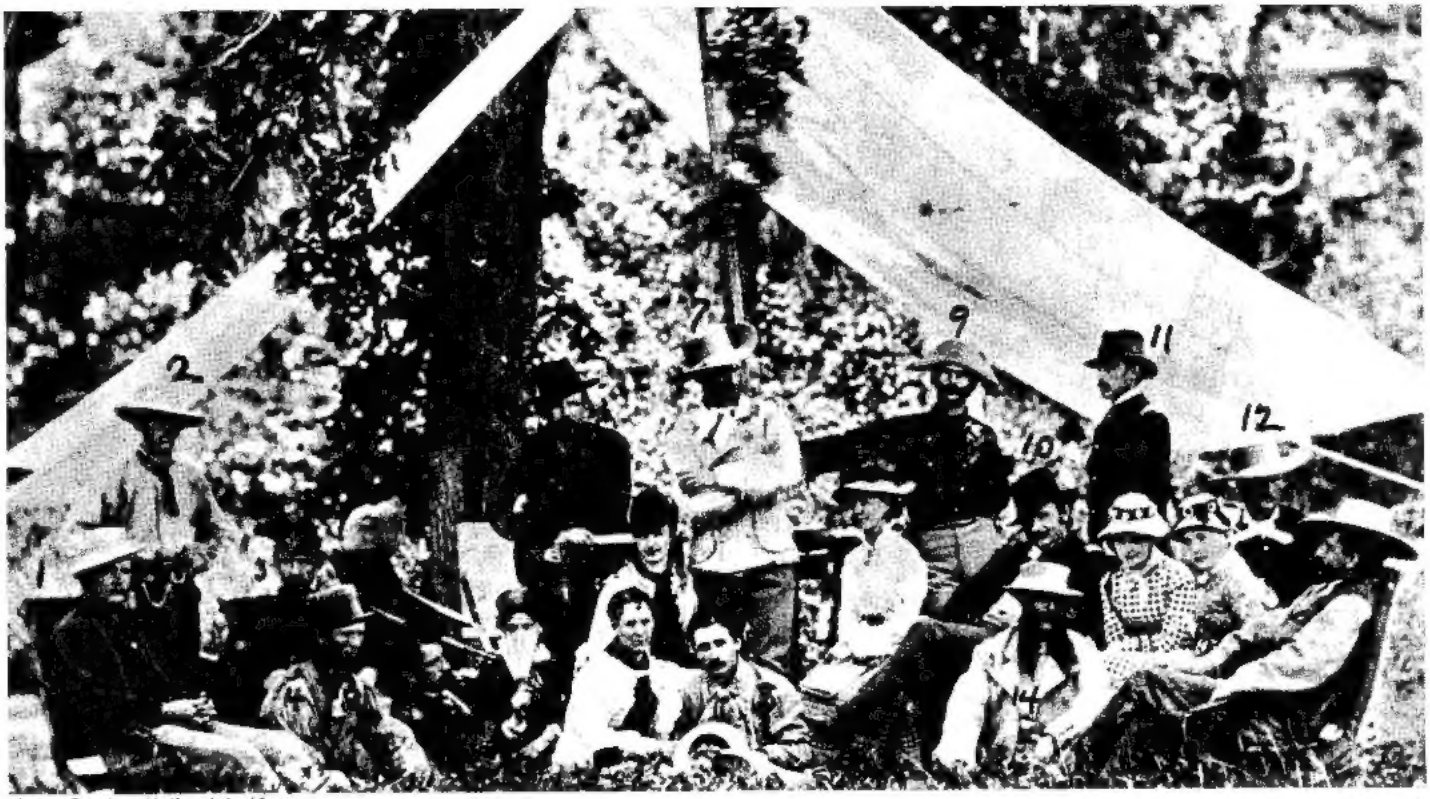

Photos Courtesy National Archives

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THE CUSTER STORY

By BILL JUDGE

Today is a good day to fight—
Today is a good day to die—
Cowards to the rear;
Brave hearts follow me!

—CRAZY HORSE

Author's Note: One of America's favorite pastimes is second guessing. We have our hot stove leagues and our Monday morning quarterbacks. Theories about what happened to Custer on that disastrous day of June 25, 1876, have consumed more words than any other battle in our history, with the exception of Gettysburg.

This theorizing apparently originated with Lieutenant E. S. Godfrey (later General), who ignored the evidence of his first observations and statements to advance an idea of what he assumed had occurred.

Some books and stories are based on theories so complicated in origin and depth that they are ridiculous. Many are intended as a demonstration of the author's own astuteness, rather than his attention to accuracy of detail. A few writers have actually spent less than a day visiting the battle location, yet consider themselves authorities on what happened there! Anything about Custer and the fight can be "proved" by lifting portions of Indian statements concerning the battle—especially those Indians who repeated what they heard, but did not actually witness.

My account of the Custer fight is based on statements of participants in the actions described, on the statements of the first men to follow the trail of Custer's horses and view the battle remnants, and upon modern metal detection discoveries directed and supervised by the staff at Custer Battlefield National Memorial.

It will be a refutation of the myths and fallacies advanced by writers unable to find a plausible reason for the defeat of Custer and who apparently believe that one white trooper is equal in fighting ability to ten red fighting men. The simple basic Custer story is sufficiently dramatic without artificial theories or distortions.

AFTER the battle of the Little Big Horn (the river was first known as the Little Horn), the original report of Major Reno to the head of the Ordnance Department carried this statement: "An Indian scout who was with that portion of the regiment which Custer took into battle, says that from his hiding place he could see the men sitting down under fire and working at their guns—a story that finds confirmation in the fact that officers who afterwards examined the battlefield, as they were burying the dead, found knives with broken blades lying near the dead bodies."

Immediately there comes to mind a picture of frantic and desperate men, surrounded by howling savages, picking at jammed cartridges until the knife blades break and all hope is gone. If their carbines had not failed to extract the shells, their lives would have been saved and Custer would have won the battle!

George Armstrong Custer, about 1867

Photo Courtesy Custer Battlefield National Monument and E. S. Luce 7th Cavalry Collection

Major Reno's report became the basis for the legend that the Springfield carbine's failure was one of the prime reasons for Custer's defeat. It has been repeated in almost every book and story about the battle of the Little Big Horn. Lieutenant Godfrey stressed malfunction of firearms as one of the three basic reasons for Custer's downfall.

We would like to quote from a few versions inspired by Reno's report. Number one: Custer's men "were armed with the single-shot Springfield carbine—slow of fire, easily and quickly fouled, and defective of shell extraction—a prime factor in Custer's defeat."

Number two: The soldiers were armed "with single-shot .45-70 caliber Springfield carbines, an accurate and deadly weapon up to 600 yards, but when fired rapidly, the breech became foul and the greasy cartridges often jammed and could not be removed by the extractor. This meant that the empty shell had to be forced out by the blade of a hunting knife. This very fact was responsible for the death of many a trooper this hot Sunday, and may actually have been the indirect cause of the great disaster."

A third quote is from the pen of another man regarded as a thorough historian, highly praised for his recent work on the Custer fight. "There is no doubt that the final extinction of the Custer command was hastened by another factor which is often overlooked—the carbines became overheated and began to jam, the extractors cutting through the rims of the shells as though they were putty and leaving the exploded cartridges wedged in the chambers and rendering the weapons useless until the shells could be removed with a knife."

It is an interesting note that the Government recommended the removal of jammed cartridges with the ramrod. Knives had a tendency to cut through the soft copper, separating the rim and leaving the rest of the case in the chamber.

Admittedly, the .45-70 single shot carbine was a poor choice of weapons for the simple reason that it was a long range defensive weapon. Not the type to distinguish itself in the Custer portion of the battle, it did do good work on the hill with Reno.

The reasons why the single shot carbine was not a good offensive weapon

Top photo, General Custer (center, standing) with a hunting and camping party from Fort Lincoln at the Little Heart River in 1875. Several of the men pictured were killed at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Left, bones of horses and graves of unidentified soldiers on the ridge where the last stand was made.

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are obvious. The only time it could be safely used in a charge was when men were deployed in extended order. Forty per cent of the men with Custer were without prior combat experience. To expect them to load and fire a two-handed weapon, while still retaining control of untrained mounts, was asking the impossible. The first blast of the carbine close to the sensitive ears of an untrained horse would have been the last —for that particular trooper on that particular horse.

Indians, when hunting buffalo (or Reno's men on the retreat), fired across their saddles to the side. This was accepted as the best method of firing from horseback. Cavalry used the revolver, a one-handed weapon, during a mounted attack.

MAJOR RENO had been a member of the military advisory board which had accepted the Springfield as the firearm best suited for the military.

In 1872, the Ordnance Department had requested an appropiation of $150,000 to manufacture an improved breech loader at the Springfield Armory. It had undergone thorough field testing in competition with Sharps, Remington, and Ward-Burton bolt action rifles and had been highly recommended.

Appropriations for its manufacture were approved, provided the carbine survived a competitive test with all other firearms submitted by civilian inventors and manufacturers.

The conditions were accepted, a board was convened in the fall of 1872, and testing began and continued through part of 1873.

The tests that the firearms had to pass should be studied carefully, in view of the accusations that followed the battle on the Little Big Horn.

1. RAPIDITY WITH AIM. The number of shots, which fired in one minute, strike a target six feet by two feet at a distance of 100 feet. Any cartridges missing fire in this or other tests to be tried with a prick-punch, or opened to ascertain the cause of failure. The test to be begun with an empty chamber or magazine, the cartridges to be disposed at will on a table.

2. RAPIDITY AT WILL. The number of shots that can be fired in one minute, irrespective of aim.

3. ENDURANCE. Each gun to be fired 500 continuous rounds **without cleaning.** The state of breech-mechanism to be examined at the end of every fifty rounds. (The heating and jamming factor would surely show up in tests two and three.)

4. DEFECTIVE CARTRIDGES. Each gun to be fired once with each of the following defective cartridges: 1. Cross-filed on head to nearly the thickness of the metal. 2. Cut at intervals around the rim. 3. With a longitudinal cut the whole length of the cartridge from the rim up. A fresh piece of white paper marked with the number of the gun, being laid over the breech to observe the escape of gas, if any occurs.

5. DUST. The piece to be exposed in a box prepared for that purpose to a blast of fine sand-dust for several minutes; to be removed, fired fifty rounds, replaced for five minutes, removed and fired fifty rounds more. (There was plenty of dust at the Little Big Horn.)

6. RUST. The breech mechanism and receiver to be cleansed of grease and the chamber of the barrel greased and plugged, the butt of the gun to be inserted to the height of the chamber in brine for ten minutes, exposed for two days to the open air standing in a rack, and then fired fifty rounds.

7. EXCESSIVE CHARGES. To be fired once with eighty-six grains of powder and one ball of 450 grains of lead; once with ninety grains and one ball; and once with ninety grains and two balls. The piece to be closely examined after each discharge.

None of the civilian rifles, including all of the popular makes of repeating rifles, was acceptable and the weapon chosen was the single-shot Springfield Model 73, developed at the Springfield Armory. This was the carbine used at the Little Big Horn. It is pretty conclusive that the 73 Springfield must have been the best weapon available at that time.

Prior to the competitive examination, extensive field tests had been made by cavalry units on the frontier. A summary of the field test by the Seventh Cavalry, Custer's own regiment, is given in the words of the reporting officer. "Whenever the arms were in the hands of the men, it was noticed that the piece (that) seemingly required the least attention in manipulation of loading was the government Springfield—this superiority appears to rise from the fact, first, of their greater leverage, *by which a tight cartridge is withdrawn without difficulty.* The mechanism, although somewhat cumbrous, appears to be sufficiently strong, and to perform all its functions with the greatest efficiency."

The cartridge failure rate was 1.96% for the 96,479 cartridges fired in the field trials, the lowest percentage for any of the field trial firearms. Apparently, all of the firearms tested had extraction difficulties, with the Springfield being the least troublesome in this respect.

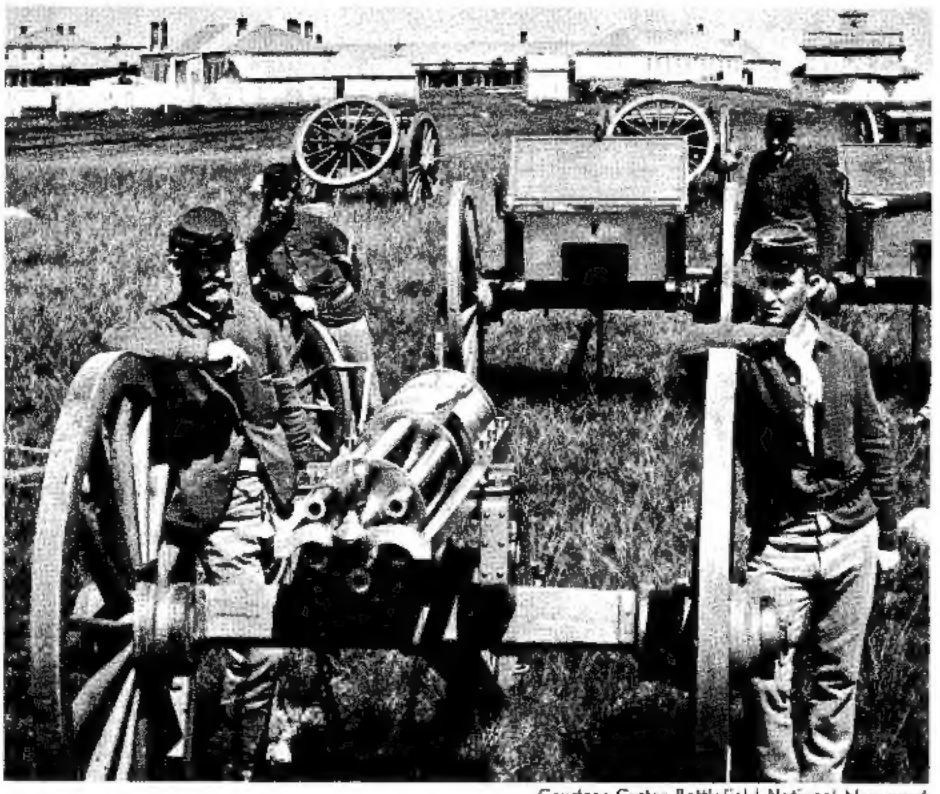
IN REALITY, the Springfield carbine deserves a better reputation than that foisted upon it after the Custer battle. It had a long and distinguished record in the army, one that would be hard for any other firearm to equal. The action of the Springfield carbine was based on a U.S. patent issued to Erskine S. Allin, master armorer at the Springfield Armory, September 19, 1865. Springfield rifles using this action were used in the Wagon Box and Hay Field Fights in 1867.

Never, before the Little Big Horn fight, had the rifle been singled out for abuse, yet the action was the same as that used in the earlier .50-70 model. From 1867 until 1873, the Allin action was used in both carbines and rifles in the .50-70 model. After 1873, the .45-70 model was available for the infantry and the .45-55 carbine for the cavalry. It was still used as a training arm by various militia and home guard units during World War I. Many of us can remember its being used in military funerals. Ammunition is still available for the carbine or rifle.

Having disposed of the extractor mechanism failure, with the exception of later battle notes, let's examine the .45-70 cartridge, the real rascal in the case of the defective firearm.

The .45-70 as quoted, under that designation, was loaded for the infantry with seventy grains of black powder. Although the case remained the same, it was only loaded with fifty-five grains of black powder for the cavalry. The unused volume of the shell, when loading with fifty-five grains of powder, was filled with wads to pack the powder charge tightly and insure ignition.

This is an important factor, for Lieutenant Godfrey and others state that cartridges used by the Seventh Cavalry during the battle were infantry loads with a powder charge of seventy grains. Yet, all of the complete cartridges recovered at the field have been the standard cavalry load or charge of fifty-five grains of powder, so identified with the



Courtesy Custer Battlefield National Monument

A Gatling gun. The author speculates on the reasons for Custer's controversial decision not to take along Gatling guns, which might have reversed the outcome of the battle.

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number of inserted wads. If there were defects in the cartridges these, of course, would be more prevalent in the seventy grain load because of the additional heat and expansion.

The .45 carbine ammunition was originally loaded with fifty-five grains of black powder behind a 405 grain bullet, in a 2.1" straight taper, centerfire, inside a primed copper case. The bullet had three deep, wide grooves which contained an excessive quantity of white wax and tallow. It is on this excessive lubrication that most writers base their charges of failure of rifles to extract.

It is generally stated that the lubricating mixture, under heat, would mix with a residue of fired black powder forming a paste that would weld the fired case in the chamber. It might be pointed out here that any heat that would cause such a paste to form would also, upon repeated firing, keep it in such a soft state that it would not greatly hinder the action of the piece. It would only become a factor in the functioning of the mechanism upon the cooling of the piece. (Refer back to the prolonged firing test.)

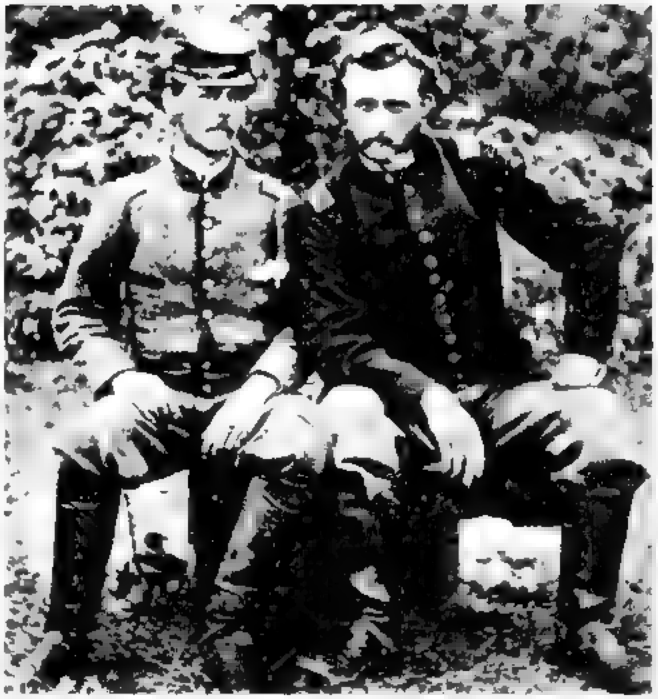
It was the copper case, not the grease, that was responsible for most of the trouble. The soft cartridge, when fired, expanded and molded itself to the chamber. The soft case would not contract after firing as does a case made of brass. The grease was an aid, not a deterrent factor. It was also a means to prevent moisture from entering the case to damage the powder charge.

A SECOND reason given for the failure of weapons was said to be the forming of verdi-gris by chemical reaction of whatever type container carried the cartridge. Several types of carriers are cited as being used during the battle. These are described as webbed belts with cartridge loops, leather belts with cartridge loops, and leather cartridge boxes. No matter what type container, the same reason is advanced—verdi-gris.

Webster defines verdi-gris as a coating that forms on brass, copper, or bronze. If verdi-gris had been the real reason for the malfunction in extraction, then changing to brass casings, such as is used in modern cartridges, would not have altered the situation. And we are apparently doing the wrong thing when we are using copper plumbing in our homes! The copper cartridges were exposed to deteriorating influences for a period of about thirty days. Observe copper cartridges in museums—you will see these in web belts, leather belts and boxes. They have been there for years, yet notice how slowly they deteriorate.

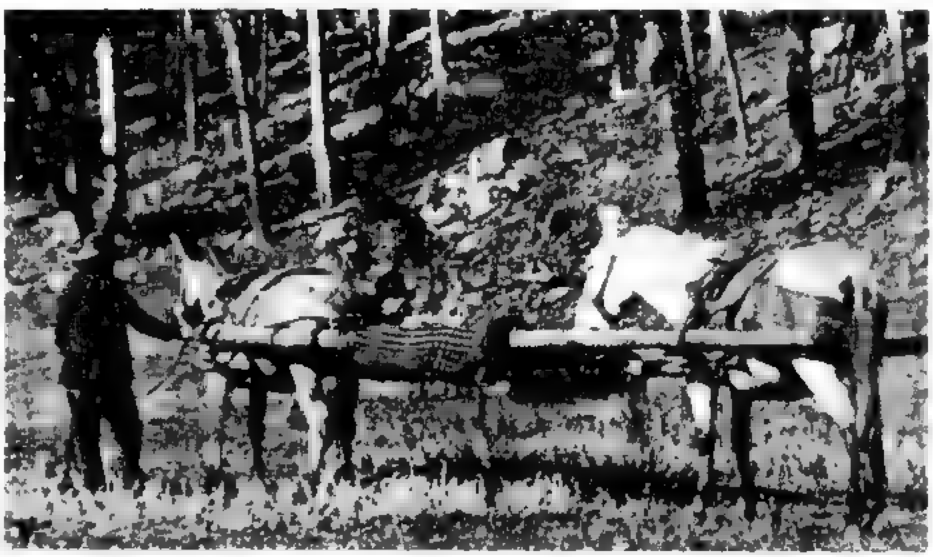
From the condition of cartridges recovered after an exposure of eighty-five years to the different elements (including soil acids and alkalis), it is hard to believe that verdi-gris could have been a major factor in the malfunction of the firearms. It is said that not one cartridge failure due to jamming has ever been turned in at Custer headquarters.

When Benteen came up to Reno's position, his men divided their ammunition with the men of Reno's command, who had used up considerable quantities of their own. An officer was sent back to hurry the reserve ammunition in advance of other supplies. After finishing with Custer, the Indians re-engaged the united commands of Reno, Benteen and McDougall. The morning of the second day, the remainder of the Seventh was again attacked. Yet, with all of the cartridges fired by his men, Reno reported a fail-

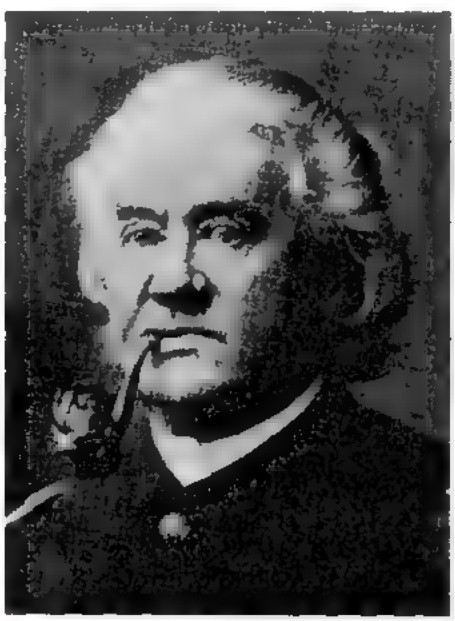


Courtesy Jorud Photo Shop

Left, Lt. Custer poses beside a Confederate prisoner, once his classmate at West Point, who was captured at Fair Oaks in 1862. Below, the method used to transport the wounded to the steamer "Far West" after Little Big Horn. Bottom, left, Lt. Luther Hare of the Reno Battalion. Bottom, right, Capt. F. W. Benteen, one of Custer's severest critics.



Courtesy National Archives



Courtesy Custer Battlefield National Monument and E. S. Luce 7th Cavalry Collection

ure of only six carbines from a total of 380.

In contrast to this, Custer's men fired very few times. The first shots occurred at the middle ford. At the site of the last stand, few shots were got off by the majority of men because the action was at close range and lasted only a short time. Indians stated that, in stripping the bodies of ammunition, very few cartridges were missing from the belts. Most historians quote this as proof of the failure of the carbines. The real reason was the lack of time and opportunity to fire.

Reno's percentage of failure amounts to less than 1.5 percent of the total number of arms under his command. Allowing the same percentage of failure to Custer (it certainly should not be more because of the comparatively shorter period of time engaged and fewer number of shots fired), the number of failures could not have been more than four or five out of a possible 225. That is certainly not important enough to qualify as a major cause of Custer's defeat as so many people would like to imagine. It is hardly a figure to prove decisive in any battle, whether it was a century ago or at the present time. This firearm failure myth should be laid to rest, once and for all.

THE RUMOR has often been circulated that Custer's men were drunk at the time of the fight. This is supposed to be verified by a report that Indians recovered canteens containing whiskey from the field of battle.

These errors were originally printed in a book containing the memoirs of an Indian participant. He later admitted he made the statement because it made a good story. His retraction came too late—the book had already been printed. The matter also came up at the Reno inquiry and through news sources.

Even though the report was unfounded, not everyone knows this, and it is still referred to as an example of what the evils of drink can do to a man in a moment of crisis.

Custer's troopers were drinking men, as were most men and officers on the frontier. For this very reason, they were not paid until after their departure from Ft. Lincoln. It is said that the men had two months' pay coming to them and a large percentage would have been unfit for duty had they been paid prior to their departure.

The only other opportunity they had to purchase liquor would have been at the mouth of the Rosebud where a sutler's store had been opened.

It is an accepted fact that where there is liquor, enlisted men can generally find a way to gain possession of it whether it is banned or not. One recruit, in a group of replacements being sent to the Seventh Cavalry at Ft. Lincoln, related just such an experience.

As usual the recruits had no money, but they did have an old experienced sergeant in charge. The sergeant, at a stop along the way, had some of the recruits pawn their rifles in a saloon in exchange for liquor. Later, the sergeant entered the saloon and threatened the proprieter with arrest for illegal possession of government property. The replacement detail had their cake and ate it too, in the retention of both liquor and guns.

So the enlisted man will generally find some way to get liquor, with or without money, if there is even the scent of it on the air. A canteen, however, is the logical container and the first place that a suspicious officer would inspect. Of necessity, the men would find a different hiding place. During the Civil War, soldiers found that the long, muzzle loading rifle barrel of over a half-inch bore and approximately a yard long could carry two or three stiff jolts of whiskey. The future General Grant was said to have been instrumental in discovering this ingenious hiding place.

The greatest single factor that would refute the story that Custer's men were drunk, was that the Rosebud was a three days' march from the Little Big Horn. Even had the presence of whiskey in canteens escaped the watchful eyes of officers, it just wasn't in an enlisted man's nature to still have whiskey in his possession after three days' close association and after such a prolonged dry spell as he had had prior to the battle.

National Archives

Minneconjou Ford, where it is believed Custer may have attempted to cross the Big Horn River.

MANY of the myths that have grown around Custer have their origins among writers who have no real understanding of conditions as they existed at the time of the battle.

One of these legends is that Custer refused to accept several Gatling guns because they were drawn by condemned cavalry horses and, for that reason, would slow and impede his march.

It is well known that a horse can pull more than it can carry. A horse, considered unsuitable as a mount, might still be able to pull a Gatling gun and in a team of four, still hold the pace over suitable ground.

The cavalry, by necessity, demanded uniformity in the selection of the horses intended as mounts for its troopers. They had to conform in age, weight, height, gait and soundness of wind and limb. Sometimes they were even selected because of color. A horse could be "condemned" or rejected when it failed to meet any one of those requirements, although sound in every other respect. Sometimes good cavalry horses were condemned so that officers might buy them for private mounts.

The cavalry branch of the service had two purposes. One was to transport the greatest number of men to a certain objective in the shortest length of time. The other was to concentrate a mass of men opposite the weakness of an enemy line and to hit that weak point with the greatest weight and speed that could be mustered. Horses had to be matched with utmost care or the entire purpose of the cavalry was lost.

Cavalry horses were much larger than Indian horses on the whole. Very few of the latter would ever have qualified as a cavalry mount and yet they consistently outran and outlasted their larger brethren. Cavalry horses also carried a greater load than the Indian ponies. Because of their size and heavier work burden, they had to have grain rations to supplement what grazing they were permitted.

With this explanation of the selection or rejection of horses suitable as cavalry mounts, it is clear that an unsuitable mount would still be considered sound enough to pull a Gatling gun.

During this period on the frontier, Gatling gun crews were inexperienced and often unfamiliar with the operation of their weapon. The War Department refused requests for practice ammunition and even suggested that the crews pay for it out of their own pockets!

The reason Custer refused the aid of the Gatling guns was not because they were hauled by condemned cavalry mounts but probably because of the terrain which he was to encounter on his journey to the Little Big Horn.

THE NUMBER and types of firearms possessed by the Indians at the Custer battle has been debated many times, both by Custer students and firearm experts. Beyond question the Indians were well armed—at least, adequately enough to win the battle, which is the point so often lost in the discussions and arguments.

Approximately forty per cent of the enlisted men in Custer's regiment were inexperienced. Of the remaining men, only seventeen per cent had had previous experience in Indian warfare. Four per

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D. F. Barry Collection

Two Moon, war chief of the Cheyennes.

Gall, fighting chief of the Uncapapas.

cent were Civil War veterans. In all probability, some of the raw recruits had never fired a rifle prior to the Little Big Horn battle.

Officers and men who took part in the fight under Reno stated that the Indians were better armed than Custer's troops. Estimates of the number of Indians using repeating rifles vary from thirty per cent to over fifty per cent. These figures seem high and it must be remembered that the rifles were in the hands of the experienced and more aggressive among the hostile forces. Recovery of Indian cartridges prove that owners of the repeating arms were the nearest to Reno's defensive area. Because of this, the repeating rifles were, of course, more noticeable to the encircled men.

Spent cases found around Indian positions show that the hostiles were armed with Spencers, Henrys or Winchesters, the latter both old and new models, and Springfield .50-70s as well as .45-70s. The latter caliber was the same as those used by the troopers, but the Indians had both government and commercial loads for their .45-70 rifles. Revolver cases in all sizes were also found.

Over 200 carbines with ample ammunition were captured from Custer's final stand site and from Reno down on the flats. It is probably a toss-up between the Henry and the .45-70 as to the number of cases recovered from Indian positions. Around Reno's position there were distinct locations where Henrys were used exclusively, and where Henrys or Winchesters and .45-70s were intermingled.

Along the line of the chase after Reno's men from the flats to the hills, Henrys were predominant. At the middle ford, Henrys, Spencers, .45-70s, .50-70s and revolver cases were recovered. At the "hot corner" where Custer's forces were separated, the same repetition of variety was found.

It is said that the Indians were short of ammunition. If so, then it must have been because of the amount used against Crook at the Rosebud, the big fight prior to the Custer battle. It has been remarked that at the Rosebud cartridges were carried onto the field in their original wooden cases.

The battlefield at Custer shows no lack of ammunition, except at the final stand area where evidently hand to hand fighting took place without firearms. Nowhere in this final area—on the fighting trail, in the ravines, or on the surrounding hills—can cartridges be found except in very rare scattered instances. Those inspecting the field afterward said that fired cases were very few in number, but did increase around the final few troopers.

The natural conclusion must be that when the Indians needed the firepower, they had it in the key spots, and in sufficient quantity to win the day.

THERE are those who profess that the Indians knew nothing of the coming of Custer. This makes a very dramatic story but there is ample evidence to the contrary.

Both Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse had sent warnings that the white men should not invade their territory unless they were prepared to fight. Having sent such a warning, they would certainly have been on guard against invasion.

As late as the day before the battle, Indians were still coming in from the reservations to join with their allies in the big encampment. They carried the latest news and information of the white men.

A big battle had been fought with General Crook when he invaded the Indian territory. Demonstrations had been made against Gibbons. Several of his men had been killed, horses stolen, and his scouts frequently driven back to the protection of the main camp. Examination of Indian camping grounds had shown that they had been prepared for an attack on their village as early as a month prior to the Custer engagement.

Arickarees on their way to Ft. Lincoln to serve as Custer scouts had been attacked by Sioux at Ft. Lincoln. All of the scouts for Custer and Gibbons, both white and red, knew approximately the location of the hostile camp and the numbers of the enemy. All tried to persuade Custer they were too many to fight. When Custer turned a deaf ear to their warnings, many of the scouts predicted that they were riding to their deaths.

In the Indian encampment they knew Custer was on the way. They knew when he had left Ft. Lincoln for there were members in the camp that had been at Ft. Lincoln. Many historians forget the effectiveness of the Indian grapevine. As an example, on the same day that the battle took place, the Shoshones and Crows at the base camp of General Crook on Goose Creek knew of the defeat of Custer. This camp was about two days' ride away from the Little Big Horn. Custer was defeated in the afternoon. They knew it before dark on the same day.

The hostile Indians knew of Custer's approach, for they had been keeping an eye on Gibbons in the vicinity of the Rosebud where he met with Terry and Custer.

What seems to have misled the Indians, was Custer's night march and the Reno diversion at the upper end of the camp. These took them somewhat by surprise and they had to change their plans temporarily.

Because of the confusion attending his early arrival and Reno's unexpected attack, it is fairly safe to say (and the Indians admit) that if Custer had attacked the head of the village with his entire force, instead of detailing the job to Reno, he would have won the battle. The great mistake that Custer made was to forget the fundamentals of his—and the Indians'—mode of fighting.

The level ground on which the encampment was located was the right type of terrain for one of his famous charges. The Indians could have been taken by surprise, a tremendous advantage in his favor. Custer gave up these vital tactical advantages and chose to fight the hostiles on grounds of their choice—not his—losing the surprise and his big opportunity. His big mistakes were vital; he made others but they were minor compared to the advantages he gave the Indians. There are those who say Custer could not have known this beforehand, but it cannot be dis-

(Continued on page 55)

Tom Custer

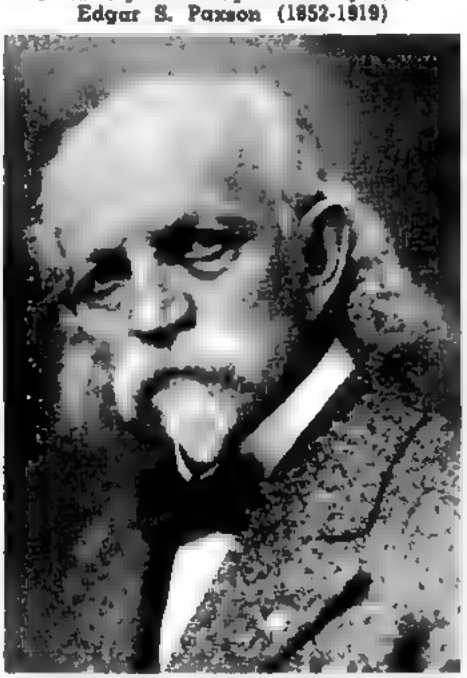
Denver Public Library

"CUSTER'S LAST STAND"

The Painting and the Artist

By W. E. PAXSON

From a preliminary sketch by artist Edgar S. Paxson (1852-1919)



Courtesy the Author

"CUSTER'S LAST STAND," the catastrophic last phase of the Battle of the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876, in which the hostile Sioux and Cheyenne Indians wiped out to a man General George Armstrong Custer and his valiant U.S. Seventh Cavalry, has given birth to an endless number of illegitimate, childish tales, fantastic claims, and preposterous pretenses over the past eighty-seven years.

Every nine months, seemingly, a new one is born, each of which, whether true or false, continues to capture the imagination of millions of eager-beaver Custer and Americana fans. This is possible for the simple reason that the battle itself has always and will always excite the interest and imagination of millions of people, both children and adults, not only in this country but the world over. The Custer battle has this kind of magic.

General Custer's body may be buried at West Point, but the intrigues, mysteries, and excitement of his story will never be buried; it will live forever. One of the instrumentalities, other than movies, novels, historians and would-be historians, that has helped to immortalize Custer and his tragic defeat, is the effort of artists to re-create that dramatic scene from which no white man lived to tell the tale. Many Custer's Last Stands have been painted, some good and some bad. Mostly, the bad ones are historically inaccurate and are, in many cases, an affront to art. Strangely enough, the bad ones, like the "bad guys," have made the biggest impression. One in particular is the bizarre but interesting Cassily Adams beer parlor painting which was and continues to be known to millions; lithographs of this painting which was burned in 1946 have graced the walls of almost every saloon and bar in the country.

Another painting of Custer's Last Stand, infinitely better, many important critics believe, but not so well known, has recently become the center of one of the biggest and most widely publicized clashes over historical art in recent history. This painting is the one on the cover by my grandfather, Edgar S. Paxson. The controversy is another story, but suffice to say it involved the artist and a host of Western art lovers, Custer haters and worshippers, and their number is legion. The controversy was predicated upon whether or not the painting should be taken out of Montana.

First, let me tell you something about this spectacular Paxson painting, and then I'll tell you something about the genius whose talented brush produced this historical masterpiece.

The prodigious painting of Custer's Last Stand by E. S. Paxson measures over ten feet long, is six feet tall, and weighs close to 1,000 pounds. It required twenty years of painstaking research and study, and eight years to paint, and it contains more than 200 figures in seething, pulsating action. Six of the surviving Indian chiefs in the battle (Gall, Two Moon, Crazy Horse, Crow King, Hump, and White Bull) posed for my grandfather; and Chief Two Moon and other Indians in the battle on several occasions shortly after the conflict went over the battlefield with the artist and told him what part they played, what they saw, and what they knew. No interpreter was needed, for my grandfather spoke several Indian dialects and was a master of the Indian sign language.

Also, and this is vitally important, the Indians liked and admired E. S. Paxson, and wondered at his magic pencil and brush. They told him the truth about the battle, not what they thought he wanted them to tell him, which was generally the case when others interrogated Indians. The Indians had confidence in their "White Brother" and held back nothing. This was proven by my grandfather over the years as he compared story after story under all kinds of conditions. His information was not garnered fifty, sixty or eighty years after the battle, but came directly from the feedbag almost immediately after the crushing Indian victory (which ironically subsequently led to their ultimate defeat). Later this information was checked and rechecked time and again over the years.

THE FACES of the officers and many of the soldiers in his painting are actual portraits of the ill-fated Custer Seventh Cavalry. These faces had been indelibly etched on the mind and memory of artist Paxson when he sedulously studied army and family portraits of the participants in the fight. E. S. Paxson knew intimately many of the surviving officers and soldiers in the Major Reno and Captain Benteen contingents in the Battle of the Little Big Horn of which the Custer massacre was the final phase. One in particular was Fred E. Server who was mentioned often in my grandfather's diaries which he kept faithfully for twenty-nine years, and which I plan

Opposite page, a detail of E. S. Paxson's painting, "Custer's Last Stand." General Custer is shown in buckskins gripping a wound in his side. Kneeling beside Custer and firing a revolver is Adjutant Cooke. At far left, also in buckskins, is Captain Tom Custer, the General's brother.

Courtesy the Whitney Gallery

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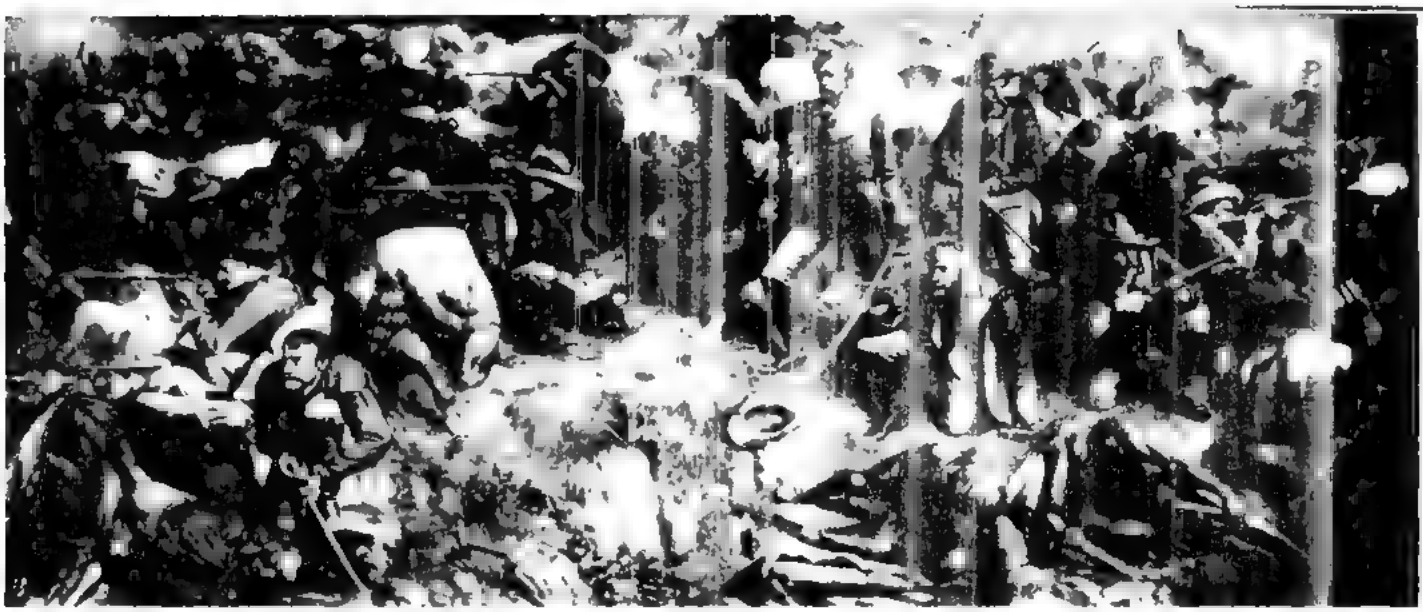


"Custer's Last Rally," painted by John Mulvaney in 1881, is regarded as one of the better depictions of the Custer fight but inferior to the Paxson painting. One critic of the Mulvaney painting has complained that Custer is shown so neatly dressed that he appears to have just stepped out of an officers' club.

to publish in the near future. When Fred Server died, E. S. Paxson made this significant diary entry:

May 14, 1911—"He was a man who I was very fond of though I had not seen him for a long time. He was an old Indian fighter. Was sergeant of 4th Infantry and detailed from General Terry's command with scout Muggins Taylor to advance with a Section up the Little Big Horn to locate Custer. They found them dead on the field. Reporting to Terry, the command moved up and located Reno . . . . Server was among those who buried the dead. I spent many a long evening in converse with him. Often we rode over the field with Two Moon and other Indians when I sketched for my battle picture. He was a fine man and ever held in reverence the mound where lay the heroes of the last great Indian fight. He was placed with them in his last sleep . . . ."

The E. S. Paxson painting of the dreadful defeat was an immediate success when it was first exhibited in Washington, D.C. in 1900. It elicited the praise and wonderment of many high-ranking army officers, dignitaries, art critics, and others in the East, who acclaimed it both as a magnificent historical work of art and an accurate re-creation of the last frightful stage of the tragic battle, considering, of course, all known facts. I have much documentary evidence to substantiate these statements.

Also, in my possession, I have the original manuscript of a long letter to E. S. Paxson from Brigadier General E. S. Godfrey, Commanding Troop "K," Seventh U.S. Cavalry, in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, in which he describes in detail what he found when he was among the first to find and help partially bury General Custer and his men on that grim day two days after the slaughter.

We see in the center GENERAL GEORGE A. CUSTER in a buckskin suit with his gauntleted hand covering a wound in his left side from which blood streams, still he stands firmly and grasps his gun as if to shoot again. Beside him ADJUTANT COOKE kneels and with his right arm fires his gun while with his left he supports his general whom he thinks is about to fall.

In front of and above General Custer is the stalwart figure of his brother, CAPTAIN TOM CUSTER, with a gun in each hand, his right arm out-stretched to fire the one and his left thrown back over his shoulder to cock the other. Behind him on horseback with his strong right arm raised in the air clutching a deadly war club, the young Indian RAIN-IN-THE-FACE prepares to strike Tom Custer, against whom he has had a grudge. At the right of Rain-in-the-Face a purple satin banner, the regimental standard, waves aloft, and beside it, in the hands of a Sergeant who has just received his death wound, floats a flag of yellow silk, beautifully embroidered,

(Continued on page 52)

Probably the best known painting of the Battle of the Little Big Horn is "Custer's Last Fight," by Cassilly Adams. This picture makes the error of showing Custer defending himself with a cavalry saber, and the Indians' shields resemble those used by African natives. The painting has been criticized from both historical and artistic viewpoints.

Paintings Courtesy the Whitney Gallery

CENTIPEDE TALES

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Illustration by Al Martin Napoletano

MY FRIEND Joseph J. Good said his brother Frank told him in 1890 that about that same time a family of movers, or maybe it was a family of squatters, in Borden County, Texas, had the following experience with a centipede.

Water was scarce and in the evening they filled a teakettle full of water to have it ready for boiling and making coffee the next morning. Before daylight came, they boiled the water over a campfire and poured a coffee pot full of it, mixed in some coffee, and boiled some more.

Somebody remarked that the coffee tasted queer. That did not prevent all the family from drinking a cup or two apiece except two little children. Before the day was over all but the little children had died. Examination of the coffee pot showed a disintegrated centipede. It was taken for granted that centipede poison had killed the family.

It seems to me that I've heard a similar story somewhere about somebody's dying from drinking coffee in which a centipede or scorpion had accidentally been boiled. I can't locate any such story, however, in my memory.

People on the frontier with open houses (before there were screens) used to be careful to look into pots, either with or without water, before they made use of such. A scorpion or a centipede or some other critter of the kind might go into a pot for water or just for shelter. Walter Prescott Webb said that his mother always tied a rag around the coffee pot at night so that no spider or scorpion could get in.

On the contrary, some of the whiskey traders out on the buffalo range used to put dead rattlesnakes, tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, and any other such creatures they could find, in barrels of whiskey to give kick to the liquid. Kick is what their customers wanted.

From here on, this piece on centipede lore is taken from a narrative written down by Joseph J. Good. I don't know just how poisonous centipedes are. Some centipedes have more poison than others, and some people are more susceptible to centipede poison than other people are. I don't go along with Joe Good on miracles, but anyhow, here's his narrative without quotation marks:

IN 1900 I went from Dallas County to my brother Frank's in Borden County. Frank had filed on school land and like the average homesteader, he was limited on house room. I slept in the kitchen on a pallet (on the floor with a quilt under me)—and slept like a log.

One night I woke up just enough to remember pulling a "big rag string" off my face. At breakfast the next morning Frank asked, "What bit you on your nose?" I replied, "Nothing." Then I remembered the big rag string.

I had seen a big long centipede in the kitchen not long back. Frank's wife chased it but failed to kill it. It was fully four inches long, shaggy and woolly.

There is no doubt in my mind but that this same centipede or one like it was crawling over my face while I was asleep, and about the time it was going over my nose I woke up enough to reach up and get hold of it; and when I did, it bit me. The bite was on the bridge on my nose, where very little blood circulates and therefore no harm came from the bite—no more than to leave a red spot with possibly enough swelling to cause Frank to notice it.

When I was bitten the second time by a centipede forty years later, I did not get off so easy. In 1930 I filed on a homestead in California. I lived there three years and then I had to leave it for six years, because of several things, one of which was finances. In 1939 I rehabilitated our house, and spent the winter of 1939-40 batching and printing tracts on a multigraph, while my family was in Los Angeles, the children attending school.

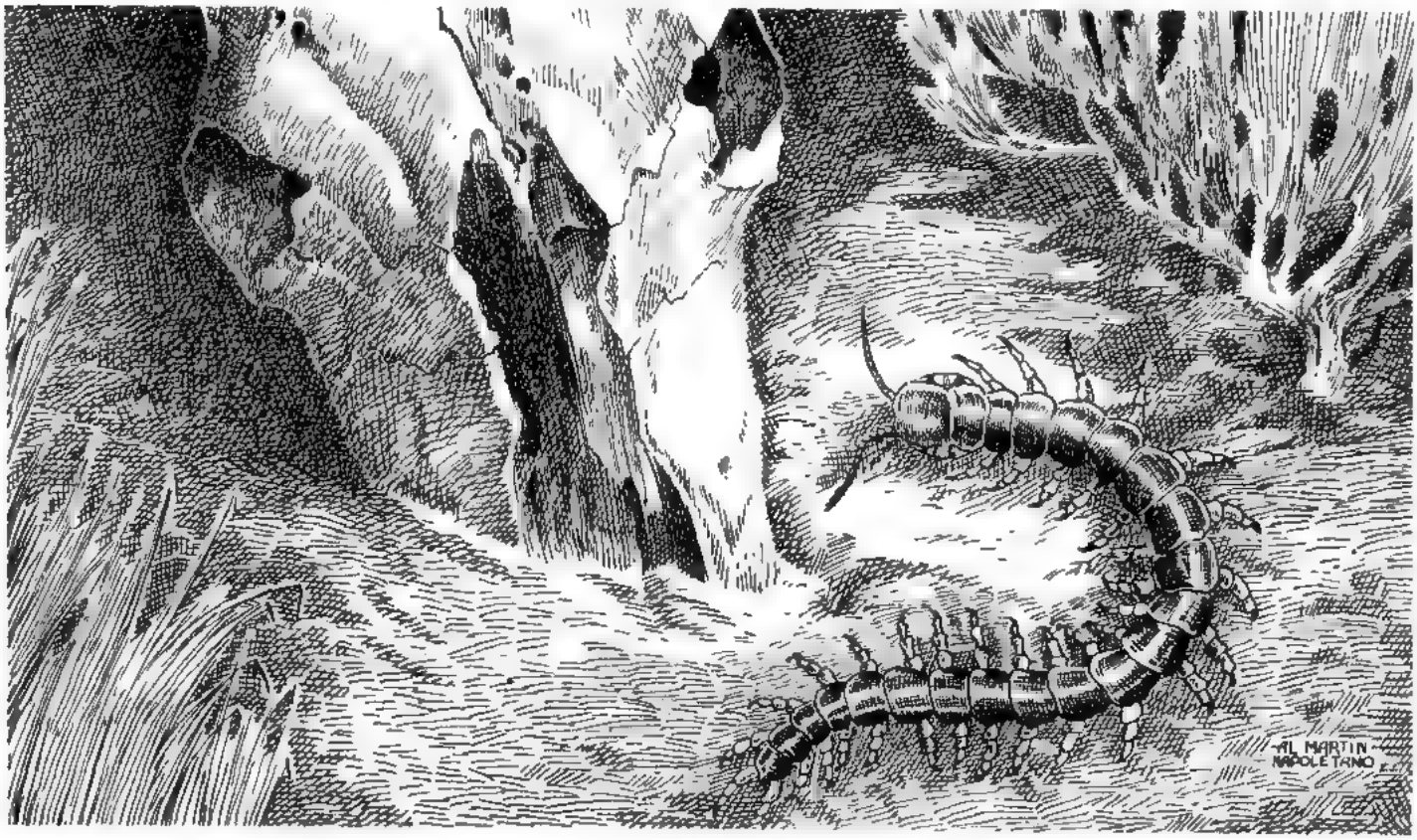
Our house on the homestead consisted of three rooms and a sleeping porch. Downstairs was a front room and a kitchen. During cold weather that winter I lived and worked in the front room, but I kept some of my equipment in the kitchen. Among other things I kept my face towel hanging there so that I could reach through the door and get it.

One night about nine o'clock, after I had cleaned my multigraph and washed my hands, I reached through the door for the towel and started to dry my hands on it. I never thought to look or to shake the towel. There was a centipede on it. I never did see it but I felt it. When it bit me I did not feel the bite, but my arm began to itch where it bit me. It was on the under part of my wrist where blood vessels are close to the surface. The sensation was that of a stinging nettle.

We used to have lots of stinging nettles in the cotton patch in Texas.

(Continued on page 71)

The Devil's own creature—ask the man who's touched one!



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The Battle of Tahlequah Canyon

By JOE PRIDE

The cunning of a "civilized" Cherokee is pitted against the relentlessness of professional manhunters. Result—one of the West's most bitter fights!

Several U.S. Deputy Marshals from the Federal Court at Fort Smith, Arkansas, pose with the body of Ned Christie, notorious Indian Territory outlaw.
Photos Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

THE HISTORY of the West is full of tales of mighty gun battles. The words "gun fight" to readers of Western historical literature provoke as many different opinions as there are members of the group. Some consider the O.K. Corral gun fight between the Earps and Clantons as the ultimate in classic Western gun battles. Others will probably stand up for the traditional gun to gun street fight, but it is a safe bet that not one will mention one of the most long, drawn-out battles ever fought between opposing forces of law and order and outlawry.

The Tahlequah Canyon Battle outdid anything the O.K. Corral Battle had to offer in the way of savagery and destruction. Both were grudge fights, the outgrowth of a series of clashes between opposing members; and both had to happen sooner or later.

One side was made up of men who rode for Parker, the other of Ned Christie and his band. The battle lasted three days and ended in a way that left surviving deputies shaken and unwilling to talk about the affair. Reports of it were terse and reluctant. There were no survivors on the outlaws' side.

It all started when Ned Christie, for reasons of his own, turned his back on his family, friends and everything he had stood for. As the saying was on the frontier, he "went on the scout." No one has ever come up with an entirely satisfactory explanation as to why Christie made such a complete about-face. Surely he had everything a man could want in the way of money, education, and high community standing. Son of a tribal chief and himself a tribal representative to the council fires, Christie had been tutored in eastern white men's schools, and seemingly was set for life in his chosen profession of gunsmith.

As far as can be ascertained, the outward start of his six-year spree of outlawry began with an argument with another Cherokee. What started as a friendly difference of opinion turned into a knock-down fight. The other man complained to the sheriff, who sent one of his men to arrest Christie for drinking—prohibited for Indians, even among the more civilized ones.

Christie not only refused to submit to arrest, but drove the officer away at gun point, despite his father's pleas to settle the matter peaceably. The police officer returned to town for help but by the time those sent to bring the rebel in got to the farm, Ned had vanished into the hills.

And in the hills he stayed, except for brief visits to his parents and sorties against Wells Fargo, banks, railroads and horse herds. Deputies knew of the visits to his home but never seemed able to get to the farm house in time to catch him. The elder Christie did all he could to persuade his rebellious son to give himself up before it was too late. His son refused and the visits grew less and less frequent.

IT WAS inevitable that Christie soon had a gang around him. A natural leader, a crack shot and intelligent, Christie was the most dangerous kind of criminal. He never used the same tactics twice; never struck the same town, bank, Wells Fargo stage, or railroad more than once; and ranging far and wide, he never came back to his hideout by the same way he left. Hideouts were changed frequently, for Christie made it a practice to keep constantly on the move. In short, the rebel made life for Parker's men miserable for six long years.

Judge Parker hoped at first that the young man would come to his senses and ride in to give himself up, but when Ned shot and killed one of his deputies, the kid gloves were off and brass knuckles emerged.

Deputy Dan Maples, young and well liked, was a comparative newcomer to Parker's staff and relatively inexperienced in the rough and tumble tactics of the frontier, although he had had experience in the eastern state where he had been reared. Warned when he was given the assignment that Christie was dangerous and likely to shoot first and ask questions later, Maples still did not understand just how touchy Christie was.

A group of "Parker's Deputies" who participated in the capture of Ned Christie in Tahlequah Canyon: Wes Bauman (24), Abe Allen (25), John Tolbert (26), Bill Smith (27), Tom Johnson (28), Capt. G. S. White (31), Charles Copeland (32), Paden Tolbert (33), Heck Bruner (34) and Dave Rusk (35).

Full of beginner's luck, he discovered Ned's whereabouts and went there. It was a fatal mistake to come up on the outlaw unexpectedly and call on him to surrender. Startled and ever quick to fight back, Christie whirled, drew and fired blind. Maples went down with Christie's bullet in his head.

Christie must have realized fully the consequences of his act, for he broke out worse than ever. Since Maples was so popular, most of his riding mates took his death as a personal affront.

Despite the fact that almost every one of Parker's deputies was looking for the outlaw—no matter what assignment they happened to be on—none of them seemed able to catch up with him. They were always just a day or so late. As they trailed him from one outrage to another, he broke out miles away behind them and they were forced to turn again and go back. At last, Marshal Yoes assigned Heck Bruner and his possemen to the exclusive duty of tracking down Christie and his band.

A posseman was usually a young officer training for the tedious and dangerous job of deputy. He rode with an older man to learn the tricks of the trade, serve summons, help escort prisoners back to Ft. Smith, drive prison wagons and so on.

Christie's band never numbered more than six or seven but those few were the cream of a long list of hopefuls. Qualifications for membership were hard to meet; a man had to be young, possess two good fast horses, a good rifle, a six-gun, an over-supply of recklessness and the ability to carry out orders under fire. In addition (and it was here that many otherwise well qualified applicants fell flat), he had to satisfy Christie as to his prowess with any firearm and knowledge of its care and repair. Many men could shoot but few could take a gun apart, check, oil, and put it together again blindfolded.

With these specialists in outlawry, Christie ran Bruner ragged for almost two years. Only twice in that time did Bruner and his posseman come near enough to exchange shots. The first time, after trailing Christie almost twenty miles, Bruner managed to slip up on the gang as they were dividing the spoils from a robbery they had committed that day. Wells Fargo Stage Company boxes were cumbersome affairs needing a bullet or two to break the lock. But luck was against Bruner and at the last minute they were spotted by a sentry.

In the short but savage gunfight that followed, Bruner fired the shot that scarred and half blinded Christie, and deepened his hatred for the whites. The bullet struck a glancing blow on the bridge of his nose, shattering it. After the deputies were driven off, Christie went first to his father, then to the tribal medicine man for treatment. Luckily for him, the medicine man was an enlightened one who believed in using the best of both red and white man's medicines. He was able to save the outlaw's life, but not the badly damaged eye. Christie promptly dropped out of sight to nurse his wounds, and Bruner took up the chase again.

AT THE second meeting Bruner was lucky enough to have three or four others with him. He trailed Christie, after a daylight raid on a rancher's horse herd, to a small box canyon. The Indian was busy dividing the horses among his men when the deputies called on him to surrender and come out. At the first challenge, Christie waved his men to their horses and suggested that the deputies come in to get him, a feat that was manifestly impossible.

While the deputies were trying to decide what to do, Christie rounded up the stolen herd and stampeded them toward the posse, riding in among them to confuse the one or two who were in a safe enough place to try a shot. He added insult to injury by pausing long enough to take along the lawmen's horses.

After his return to Ft. Smith, Bruner nursed both sore feet and sore feelings while trying to decide on his next move. Christie, as he so often did after a particularly outrageous affray, dropped out

(Continued on page 44)

Old Nevada Diggings

By HARRY LEAVITT

Men filed into the shafts and two things waited—silver and "Miners' TB." There was always a chance you'd get one before the other, and nobody minded the odds

Photos Courtesy the Author

"Boot Hill" at Pickhandle Gulch, Nevada.

THERE ARE many stories of the ghost towns of Nevada. Stories of Bodie and its "man for breakfast every morning"; of Aurora, the town that was in two states at the same time, the dividing line running down the middle of its main street and its duplicate courthouses, sheriffs and jails; of the Golden West claim, east of town, located by Mark Twain which he lost through failure to do the assessment work and which turned out to be one of the richest producers in the district.

There are tales of Tonopah and the Mizpah Hotel; The Pastime Club, where bets of $10,000 on the turn of a card were not unusual; of the Little Casino dance hall where it was four bits for once around the hall, and a bottle of beer was a dollar; of the "Bull Pen" out back of the dance hall, operated by Chinese and staffed by girls of all nationalities; and the twenty-four stamp mill of the Cash Boy, with its heavy, rhythmic thumping day and night.

The old glamour is gone. No more do the Indians race their horses down Main Street on Sunday afternoons. The Bull Pen is gone; the Little Casino is just another weatherbeaten shack, slowly coming apart. In most of the towns a few tattered, sagging shacks are all that remain, landmarks in memory of the sweat and heartbreak of those who worked and, sometimes, died in the mines.

Candeleria, in what was then Esmeralda County, was such a town. Founded in 1865, the Bohunks, the Cousin Jacks, the foreign born, outnumbered native Nevadans four to one. In 1880, at the height of its production and with water selling for a dollar a gallon, it boasted of ten saloons, two hotels, a half-dozen stores, offices for three doctors, three lawyers, and a "theatre" where traveling companies produced plays of a sort. As for the "houses of joy," there was no accurate count.

There were no sewers, few door or window screens, and the flies were terrible. The miners drilled "dry," the mill ran around the clock; and a cloud of dust hung over the camp like a pall.

"Miner's TB" was rampant. Mormons from Utah, farm lads from the middle West, husky men all of them, went down in the earth and in six months were pale, sunken-cheeked, their lungs filled with the deadly glass-like particles. As the old boys said, "It goes down, but it never comes up." Nor was the rest of the camp immune; all suffered.

Miners worked a ten-hour shift for $3.50 and that wasn't "portal-to-portal." That meant ten hours underground with a dry drill, a "widow-maker," a single or double-jack, or a short-handled muckstick. Most of them worked a seven-day week in order to make a living. Mill hands worked twelve hours. Stores were open from seven in the morning until ten at night, seven days a week. There were no churches; nobody had time—nobody cared.

IN 1882 a pipeline was laid from Trail Canyon, some thirty-six miles to the northwest into camp. Almost overnight the price of water dropped from a dollar a gallon to five cents. An enterprising barber advertised "Baths at Reasonable Rates. Hot Water, 1.25. Cold Water, 75c."

One week after completion of the water line the Carson and Colorado, a narrow-gauge which ran from Mina to Laws, in California, started service on a spur line from Belleville into camp. Douglas Robinson, a resident of Candeleria, reported seeing silver bullion in bars hauled across town on McNaughton's dray, all the big cart could handle. Day and night freight wagons rumbled

through camp in dust fetlock deep in summer and mud slippery as grease in winter. Ore from one of the mines, the Holmes, was hauled by sixteen animal teams.

Most remarkable of the big producers was the Northern Belle, but the original discoverer never saw a dime out of it. He staked it in 1865 and allowed it to lapse, since it seemed to be "borrasco." It was re-located in 1870 and in fifteen years produced $15,000,000! By the close of 1880 it had paid forty-seven dividends without a single assessment.

Records show the camp produced close to $30,000,000, altogether. Some of the old-timers estimated the figure was closer to $55,000,000, what with the high-grading and this and that.

At the close of the 19th Century, trouble started. Silver prices dropped sharply. Owners got together and issued an ultimatum; wages were to be cut to $3.00. Miners refused to work and the mines folded.

In 1873, when the Northern Belle's mill was completed a few miles north of camp, the town of Belleville came into existence and was soon known far and wide as "the best sporting town in Nevada," which, believe me, was something of a reputation. During its life, some nine and a-half wild, hectic years, Belleville had two newspapers, both owned by a gambler named Ramon Montenegro. Ramon didn't limit his business activities to his papers and his gambling; he also owned and operated the town's principal palace of pleasure, the Club House.

Everything was going well. Ramon was making nothing but money. Then it happened. He made a slighting remark in one of his papers about Judge A. G. Turner. A few days later they met on the town's main street. Both men went for their guns. Ramon, the big shot, the vice lord, went out the hard way with two slugs in his belly. No charges were filed.

Then there was the killing of Tom McLaughlin in Belleville. Tom made the headlines in Candeleria's *True Fissure*. The editor had this to say of Tom: "He was pleasant and genial in disposition and the very embodiment of a gentleman," but from the accounts of others in the community, Tom was something of a hell-raiser, in addition to being "genial and a gentleman."

It seems he had killed two men and seriously wounded a third in Marietta. He claimed his victims were members of the Brophy gang, which was made up of murderers, thieves and cutthroats, and that he had fought it out with them in true Western fashion.

Some time later, as Tom rode through Belleville, he was bushwhacked. It was the general opinion that some member of the Brophy gang was responsible. Again no arrests were made.

With a second twenty-stamp mill in operation by 1876, Belleville operated at top speed for another ten years, boasting two hotels, seven saloons, many stores, cafes, lunch counters, pimps and hangers-on.

When piped water finally arrived in Candeleria, milling operations were transferred closer to the mines. Belleville had no further reason for its existence and slipped quietly into oblivion. Nothing remains now except crumbling mill foundations, a few dug-out cabins and nameless graves above camp. Marietta, a feeder camp to the north on the shore of an alkali sink, has disappeared completely. *(Continued on page 46)*

Ruins of the Northern Belle Mill.

The wall of an old general store.

Foundation and walls of the Northern Belle Mill.

Buffalo Vernon during a steer-roping contest at Pendleton, Oregon.

First King of the Bulldoggers

By MILT HINKLE and CLAUDE KEEMA

The true story of a wizard of the rope who, before he died, had to perform at "half-throttle" and still was the best!

Photos Courtesy the Authors

About the authors: Milt Hinkle is well known to our readers and to all other good followers of the rodeo sport. The first white man to bulldog a steer, and a wild snortin' old cayuse yet, in spite of the ravages of time and the disadvantages of a crutch or cane, he knows his sport and those who made it what it is. Milt says "facts are facts," and here they are.

Claude Keema lays no claim to any rodeo records. In fact, he is scared of horses. He is the senior Sheriff of the State of Nevada in point of consecutive service, and for the year 1962 was President of the Nevada State Sheriffs' Association. Likewise for 1962, he received the Certificate of Achievement from the Nevada State Press Association for producing the best sports column in the State during the year.

THE YEAR was 1910. Folks from miles around were gathered in the little town of Pendleton, Oregon, to witness the first official Pendleton Round-Up. The usual events were on tap, such as saddle bronc riding, steer roping, Pony Express races, Indian sports, and the like.

One of the cowboy entries was a genial chap known as Buffalo Vernon. Short of stature, solidly and huskily built, sure of eye, quick handed and quick minded, this young man was one of the most spectacular performers who ever graced a rodeo arena. A better than average buster, both with saddle broncs and bulls, he was something out of this world with a lasso. It would probably be safe to say that what he couldn't do with a riata couldn't be done, whether it be roping steers in competition or entertaining the crowd with a fantastic display of lariat tricks. We have seen him many times leave spectators goggle-eyed with his ability.

Some folks might swear that the Hindus with their vaunted rope stunts are in a class by themselves. Not so. Many of the waddies of yesteryear could do things with a length of hemp that said Hindus never even dreamed possible. There was nothing of the occult about their performances, either. Their acts were perfected through countless days of practice, sweat and work, combined with an inherent deftness and talent, which all put together resulted in an amazing dexterity. The boys had a repertoire of tricks that were seemingly impossible—and the master of all was Buffalo Vernon.

In exhibitions during rodeos held in Nevada after his retirement from active competition, Buff thrilled the crowds with his wizardry. Flat on his back, he would play out a great enormous loop and dance it up and down around him—sometimes almost touching the floor of the arena, sometimes sending it fifteen feet in the air like a giant hoop on a stick.

He could make the little ones—flat ways, sideways, any way—as Will Rogers. By our standards, Will Rogers, who used his palaver to interest the spectators, was a rank amateur alongside Buff Vernon, whose loops did his talking for him. He would skip rope through these loops, big and small. And woe to the errant calf or cow who escaped her horseback pursuer if she happened to run anywhere near Buff while he was performing! Sure as sin, that old loop would snake out, and down would go the maverick. He rarely missed.

For something different, Buff would invite somebody to gallop by on a horse. He would shake out a big sideways loop for the rider to ride through and then announce what he was going to catch—maybe the rider, maybe the horse's left hind leg, or even its tail. But whatever he named, he caught.

He didn't confine his catches to men, horses or cattle during his heyday, but even included buffaloes and bears in some instances. Frightening indeed were such antics, for the horses generally deserted the riders during such goings on, and it was then strictly man against bear or buffalo. But he performed such stunts before many thrilled audiences.

The Pendleton Round-Up crowd of

1910 was to see something still different. Buffalo Vernon was going to put on an exhibition of bulldogging, something new to the roaring West. It was strictly a daredevil stunt, originated by the Negro Bill Pickett in the early 1900s, and in his case, out of dire necessity. Bulldogging and bareback bronc riding are apparently the only rodeo sports not associated with normal cowboy work.

We can best describe the action and its effect upon the crowd by borrowing a few paragraphs from Charles Wellington Furlong's book, *Let 'er Buck*. "In the first two shows, particularly 1910, 'Buff' was IT; he was half the show. He was one of the very first at the bulldogging game, won the *first championship* and showed a lot of the aftercomers the way. In his ornate chaps, yellow shirt and big well-seasoned sombrero ... he will always be remembered as one of the most spectacular performers in the early shows.

"The last night of the 1910 Round-Up will also be remembered when enthusiasm for Vernon ran so high at the dance that 'Buff' went home minus the famous yellow topside clothing, for the dance wound up with a maverick race by all hands, girls included, for pieces of Vernon's shirt as souvenirs—such was the way popularity was rated at the Round-Up that year."

And again we quote Furlong as he remarks, "Bulldogging was first introduced into Pendleton by Buffalo Vernon, the First King of Bulldoggers. He bulldogged at the first Round-Up in 1910 for exhibition, then the next year along came Dell Blancett and entered the contest as they had both done it at Cheyenne and at the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch in Oklahoma.

"Buff Vernon also introduced bulldogging at Cheyenne and with a sprained wrist to boot. This was when Colonel Theodore Roosevelt was there and put Cheyenne on the map as a result. 'Teddy' shook hands with Buff and complimented him in the inimitable way that T. R. had."

WE HOPE that some of the foregoing information may serve several purposes. First, it will clear up any controversy as to who invented the style; secondly, any misconceptions as to who first introduced it in the Pacific Northwest; and third, it will identify the first "World's Champion" in bulldogging competition. Bill Pickett gets our credit for the first, Buff Vernon for the latter two. Buff won the competition in Pendleton in 1911 against all comers, and with it went the World's Championship trophies.

We believe too, that folks will be interested in learning all of the available facts on the life of Buffalo Vernon—for the name "Buffalo Vernon" is quite a controversial one, as we well know. The story of his life has been garnered from many sources, and the illustrations accompanying this story will, we believe, prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is the story of the "Real McCoy."

He was born Jess B. Shisler on the family farm in the Province of Ontario, on June 3, 1884, the son of Joseph and Agnes Shisler. He was the next to youngest in a family of eleven children. His father died when he was seven, but until he was twelve years of age he remained on the farm, which is just eight miles across the river from Buffalo, New York. Then at age twelve, he and his brother Dick, who was his senior by two years, crossed over to Buffalo to spend the winter with a married sister, Mrs. George Chapman.

With the coming of spring, the two youngsters developed itchy feet and headed for the West and adventure. The first port of call was Chicago, where the boys went to work at odd jobs to support themselves. But the lure of the wide open spaces was in their blood and, after a few months in the Windy City, they pulled freight and headed for the great Southwest.

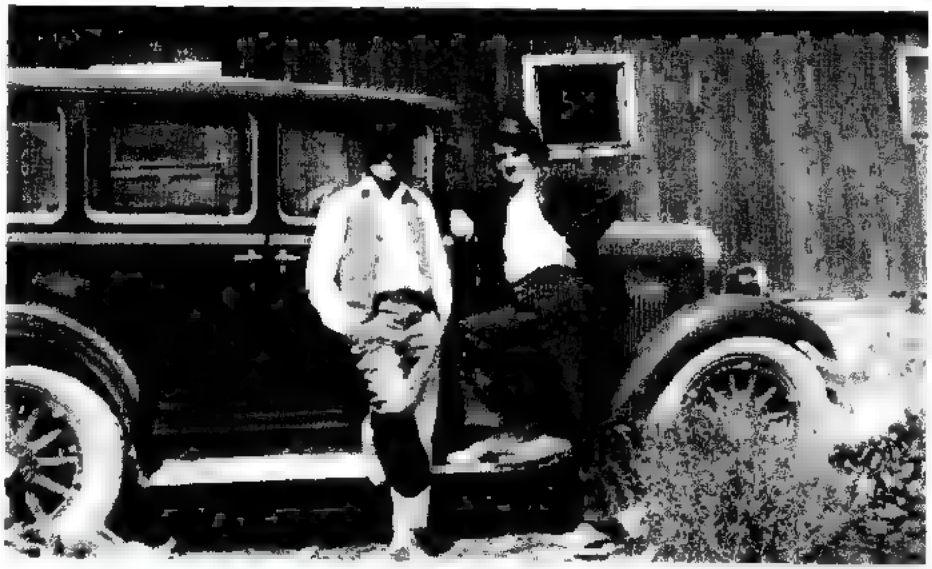
Before they left Chicago, for some reason unknown to the family, they changed their names. A surviving sister, Mrs. Maude E. MacDonald, says, "I guess they just liked the name Vernon better." Whatever the reason, Dick Shisler became Dick Vernon, and Jess Shisler became Jess Vernon. Eventually they hit the cattle and sheep ranches of Oklahoma and Texas, and there took employment. They learned the tricks of the trade—each in his own way. Dick saw the possibilities of a future business venture, while Jess became more interested in the handling of cattle and horses and some of the cowboy stunts that went along with it. Out of these interests came their eventual careers.

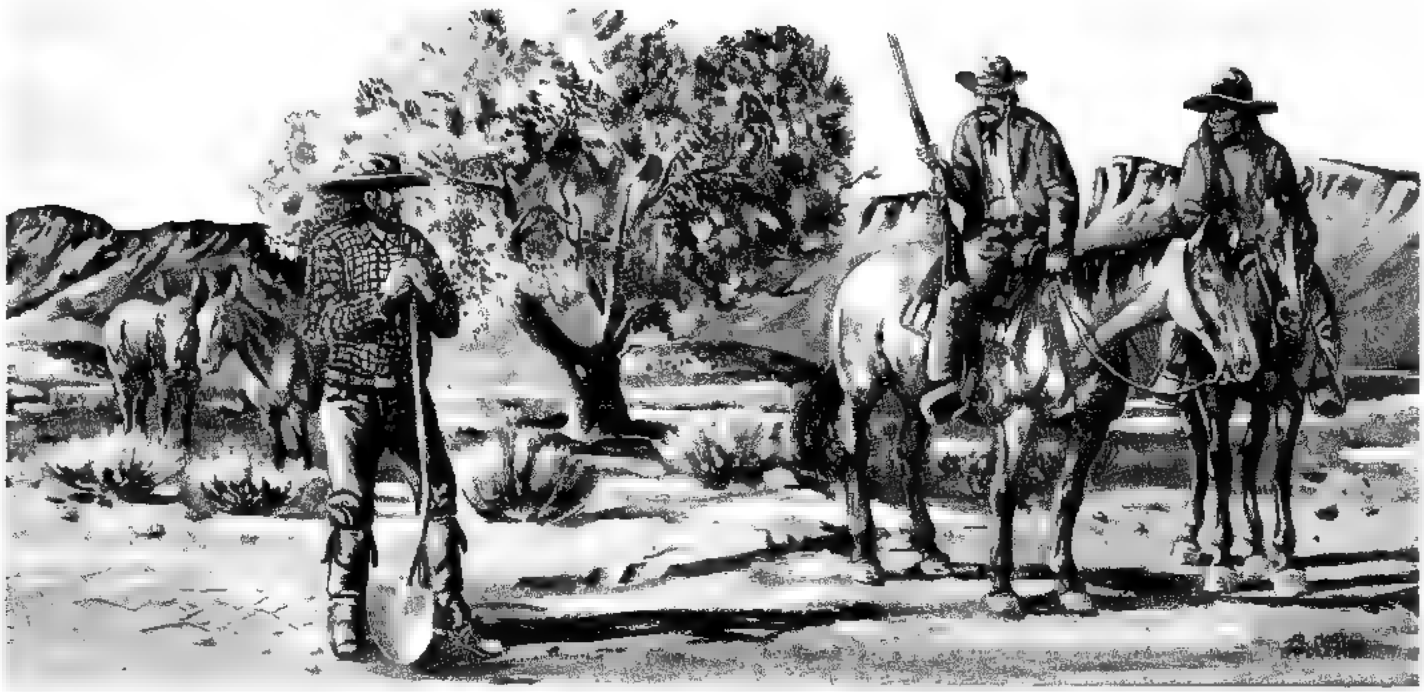
After a few years, having become well-grounded in the fundamentals of sheep raising, Dick gravitated to the Oregon-Idaho country. He formed a partnership with Senator Stanfield of Oregon in that field, and remained in it until his untimely death in 1917 in Boise, Idaho, where he is buried. There were many times during the intervening years when the brothers got together as Buff made the rounds of the big shows and the rodeo circuit. Particularly at Pendleton they appeared together many times at the Round-Ups.

Jess became thoroughly enamored of the life of a cowboy. Riding, roping, and bulldogging were his meat—and how he did enjoy them! Nothing less than perfection suited him and he went about his work with zest. Energy, patience, skill and determination went into his practice. Out of it all emerged one of the most dexterous and multi-talented cowboys of all time. Because he was just a wet-eared youngster when he arrived

(Continued on page 70)

Top: Buff Vernon at Mountain Home, Idaho, in 1919. Middle: Buff Vernon after joining one of the big shows. Bottom: Buff Vernon (right) with friend Tex Garrett in Yerington, Nevada, about 1927.





CRAFTY KILLER OF THE DESERT

By WALTER R. AVERETT

Mouse, the murdering Paiute Indian, lived in constant fear of capture—a life that earned him a very shallow grave

Illustration by Al Martin Napolstano

"IT JUST goes to show you how important a trifle can be. Mouse had robbed a store, killed two men, stolen horses, and eluded pursuit for a year and a half in the mountains and desert of southern Nevada, and then the theft of a head of cabbage put the final posse on his trail, and in ten days he was dead." My father never tired of telling me of the events that led up to that final chase that might have come right out of Western fiction.

Mouse was a mean, crafty Paiute Indian who murdered two prospectors in 1898 in the vicinity of today's Hoover Dam, and then hid out in the mountains for eighteen months, knowing that he would probably be shot on sight. He ranged over much of the area around present-day Las Vegas, Nevada, spending part of that time at a water pocket now called Mouse's Tank, deep in the weird jumble of eroded sandstone that borders the Valley of Fire. No posse was able to keep up with him until that fatal day when he stole a cabbage from a garden near Moapa, and began his last ride.

In the late 19th Century the routes from Pioche, Nevada, and St. George, Utah, converged in the Moapa Valley, some forty miles or so northeast of the ranch that later became the city of Las Vegas. The road led down to the Colorado River crossing at Bonelli's Ferry, and went on from there to Prescott, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, the mining camps in northwestern Arizona, and points beyond. It was at Bonelli's Ferry that Mouse's rampage began.

Daniel Bonelli, a leathery old man who thrived on the rigor of life in the desert, kept several men working on his ranch and operating the ferry. These employees usually numbered a few Paiutes from Moapa Valley. In the winter of 1898 his workmen included Mouse, a sly and sullen Indian who had been so named by his fellow tribesmen because of his furtive habits, and Red Eye, an Indian who was very well-liked by both white men and Indians—and who happened to be an expert tracker.

One evening Bonelli was roused out of his big stone house by the sound of shots and angry voices. Someone knocked on the door and told him that the Indians had got hold of something to drink, and that Mouse was taking pot-shots at the others and had scared them all out of camp.

"Well, that sounds just like him," Bonelli commented. "He gets mean when he's drinking, and I've heard the Indians say he's threatened to kill somebody. Get him up here and lock him up in the shed for the night. Maybe he'll be sober by morning."

Mouse was indeed sober the next morning, but Bonelli felt that it was foolish to continue to put up with a man of such disposition. He returned the Indian's .45 Colt to him, saying, "Here's your gun back. A couple of the men will take you across on the ferry to the Arizona side of the river, and you just keep on going. Don't show up here again."

MOUSE took the road to White Hills, a booming Arizona mining camp about thirty-five miles away. He worked there for a while, and then disappeared —and so did a rifle and some shells from the company store, and a freighter's horse. Cutting through the mountains toward the west, the renegade struck the Colorado River opposite the mouth of Las Vegas Wash, several miles above where Hoover Dam now stands. In swimming his horse across he got caught in quicksand on the Nevada side and left the horse there to die.

Mouse started back up the river toward Bonelli's Ferry about twenty-five miles away, but a mile's travel brought him opposite a camp on the other side. His shouts brought two men rowing across the river. Davis and Stearns had been prospecting for placer gold while a Major Greenowalt took care of the camp.

When the miners pulled up, Mouse looked at Stearns' leather boots and the .45 Colt that Davis always carried, and did some rapid figuring.

"Listen," he said, "I'd like to stay at your camp tonight, and in the morning I'll show you a good vein of gold up the

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river about ten miles. I'm headed that way, anyhow, and I might as well show you where it is since you're so close to it."

Five days later Greenowalt was working around camp when he heard someone fire a shot across the river. He looked out to see an Indian and a white man, and after a few minutes he rowed across.

"Hello, Major. Looks like you're all by yourself. Where are Davis and the other boy?" he was asked.

"Well," said the old man, "that's what's got me worried. They left here with an Indian five days ago to find a ledge that he said he knew of upstream. Mouse, I think his name was. I can't imagine why they aren't back; they had just enough to eat for one day."

"We're headed toward Bonelli's Ferry, so we'll stay here tonight, and then watch for them tomorrow on our way. Maybe they went on in to Bonelli's for more food."

George Sherwood and Red Eye didn't want to alarm the old man, so they didn't say anything more. However, they were both sure that Davis and Stearns had hunted their last ledge.

Four days before, when the men had started to hitch up the horses on the ranch at Bonelli's Ferry, they had found that one horse, the better of a pair of matched greys, was missing.

They cut tracks until they found where a man wearing leather boots had led the horse down and into the river, and then Bonelli sent a couple of men to pick up the trail and overtake the thief. They soon found where he had left the river, and followed him up the Virgin River to Bitter Springs Wash.

"He's headed up the wash, and he'll probably go across to Callville and then on to the Las Vegas Ranch. Let's see if we can catch him."

They soon found that he had taken to the hard, rocky ground, but the sharp rocks had cut the horse's feet and they had bled enough to mark the trail. Finally, late in the day, the tracks led up out of the wash over some loose dirt and rocks. The men were part-way up when the ground gave way and one horse missed his footing.

"Watch it! I'm going down!"

"So am I! Look out!"

The horses slid clear to the bottom of the wash, and it was lucky that there were no serious injuries.

"Hell and Maria! We'll never find the trail now. It'll be dark before we can get around and come out on top."

"You're right. Our horses are about done in, so we might as well stay here tonight and pick up the trail in the morning."

The next morning at daylight, however, they found that the horse which had first lost his footing was too badly cut up to continue. They headed back to the ranch to get men with fresh horses to continue trailing the fugitive.

Bonelli decided to send George Sherwood and Red Eye direct to Las Vegas. They came upon a camp near the Las Vegas Ranch, but a lone prospector there said he had not seen anyone for several days. Neither had the people at the Las Vegas Ranch seen anyone.

Several miles beyond at the Kyle Ranch they picked up their first lead. "Yes," Ed Kyle said, "I saw Mouse a couple of days ago. He came in afoot, said his horse had given out on him. Wanted to borrow a knife to fix his shoes. He left here walking, headed west toward Charleston Mountain."

"Well," said Sherwood, "I don't see any use in trying to trail him up into those mountains. It's kind of late to be starting back tonight, but we can make it to Davis and Stearns' camp and stay there till tomorrow."

ON HEARING Major Greenowalt's story they were sure that Mouse had gotten his leather boots by murdering one or both of the men. They left the Major in camp the next morning and rode on in to Bonelli's Ferry. Two men, Richmond and Galloway, had arrived there by boat, having trapped along the Colorado all the way from Green River, Wyoming.

The two trappers joined the posse to hunt for Davis and Stearns. They picked up the tracks at Major Greenowalt's camp, and followed the trail up and down over ledges and through canyons along the Arizona side of the river for several miles.

Suddenly one of the men spotted something suspicious. "Hey," he cried, "isn't that a body under that ledge?"

"That's Davis, all right, and there's Stearns right over there!"

From the looks of the tracks, Mouse had evidently been behind them as they started up onto the ridge, and had shot them in the back.

"Let's get the bodies to camp," Galloway said, "and we'll take them and the Major on down to Needles by boat. We can put them on the Santa Fe there."

Mouse virtually dropped out of sight for the next year and a half, although it was later found that he had spent much of that time at Mouse's Tank, only a few miles from the settlements in Moapa Valley. Charles Towner saw him at Indian Springs a year later, but Mouse refused to allow Towner to approach him. John Thomas and Jess Wallace, tracking a horse lost from their sawmill on Sheep Mountain, once caught sight of someone they believed to be Mouse, but they had been unable to run him down.

Finally, on July 4, 1899, Mouse made his last raid. While everyone was attending the celebration, Mouse sneaked into a garden plot belonging to an old Indian, and stole a head of cabbage. The Indian soon discovered the theft and, recognizing Mouse's tracks, gave the alarm.

When Bonelli was summoned, he predicted, "Mouse won't get away this time. I'll lend Red Eye and anyone else you need, and supply relays of fresh horses. Keep on his trail until you wear him down. There's a reward of several hundred dollars on his head, so go to it."

WITH Red Eye in the lead, the posse followed the trail back and forth through the barren country around the Valley of Fire, and then up into the Meadow Valley Wash. The posse put in ten days of hard riding, and finally all the white men except Sanford Angell had to return to Cane Springs to pick up fresh supplies and horses.

Later that same morning, Red Eye caught sight of Mouse on foot, crossing a clay flat about four miles north of Warm Springs.

"There he goes! Let's get him!"

The Indians whipped their tired horses into a run, shouting to each other in their excitement. Mr. Angell, on his white mule, was ahead of the Indians on their "cut shoot" ponies. The Indians were determined that Mouse, feared and hated by his tribesmen, wouldn't escape again, and they began firing at him. Mouse returned the fire, but he scored no hits.

(Continued on page 48)

Rock formations in the area where Mouse hid from his pursuers.

Courtesy Nell Murbarger

Hermit of the Organs

Traveling through many lands and across the sea, he made his way to the West. The people there loved him—all but one—and that one took his life

By MARJORIE WHITE

Portrait of Juan M. Justiniani, painted by Albert Fountain, Sr.

Painting and Photo Courtesy Gadsden Museum

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EL HERMITANO, "Hermit of the Mountains," the people of New Mexico Territory called the old man who lived in a cave in the Organ Mountains in the early 1870s. He was a holy man, they knew, and many believed he had the power to heal and to foretell the future.

In Mesilla, the nearest large settlement, villagers watched for the thin, white-bearded figure in the flowing cloak. Once a month, he walked the rough stretch of desert from his cave to the village for a supply of cornmeal. While there he would bless their homes, pray for the sick and the poor, and help the padre at Mass in the little mission church of San Albino.

Stories of miracles and healing had followed the old hermit from Las Vegas, in the northern part of the Territory, where he had lived for five years. He had arrived in Las Vegas one day in 1863, with a wagontrain captained by Dionicio Gonzales.

Born in Novaro, Italy, in 1801, as Giovanni Maria Augustino, he became known to New Mexicans in Las Vegas by the Spanish translation, Juan Maria de Agostino. In Mesilla, he was called Juan Justiniani, since he said he was a descendant of Justinian the Great. He was the son of a noble family of Lombardy and educated in Italian colleges for the priesthood.

This was followed by a series of pilgrimages which brought him to Caracas, Venezuela, around 1838. He wandered over Central and South America, always seeking out caves in which he could pursue his solitary meditations. Wherever he went, his aid to the poor and the sick brought him a popularity which he sought to avoid.

Mexican officials deported him to Cuba, allegedly because they were envious of his power over the lower classes. From Cuba he sailed to Canada and from there, started walking south into the States. Juan passed through New York in 1859, according to the date on an old photograph which has been preserved in Mesilla's Gadsden Museum.

Although he asked the protection of a wagontrain along the Santa Fe Trail, he refused to ride in the caravan and insisted upon walking the entire distance from Council Grove, Kansas, to Las Vegas. He slept on a blanket on the ground and would eat nothing but a mush which he made from cornmeal. When he arrived in Las Vegas, Juan refused all offers of hospitality and searched out a cave in a nearby canyon.

Now and then, he appeared in Las Vegas to trade wooden crosses, which he made from native trees, for cornmeal. Soon the miraculous recovery of sick persons to whom he administered aid and prayer while in town again earned him the undesired reverence of the villagers. Juan moved farther west to a cave in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, near a lofty point which today is known as Hermit's Peak.

A smallpox epidemic in the little settlements in the foothills drew him out of his seclusion to nurse the sick and comfort the living. In gratitude, the villagers built a log cabin for their benefactor, according to his specifications. It had a very small door, barely big enough for him to crawl in and out of the cabin. They found later that he had driven nails into the opening so that his skin would be scratched and punctured with each movement through the opening.

Under his cloak, he wore a leather shirt, studded with tacks. People in whose homes he sometimes stayed said that he slept in this shirt, always on the bare floor, refusing a bed. Juan, though not a member of the order, is still revered by the Penitente Brothers, who keep fresh crosses on Hermit's Peak and make pilgrimages there each year during Holy Week.

AFTER spending five years in the mountains around Las Vegas, the old hermit one day told his friends, "I am going south now. I feel the call to go to Mexico."

But he never reached there. Forty miles short of the border, he saw the beautiful Organ Mountains at sunset. Under the fluted columns of the Organs, he found two caves close together, one down low under an overhanging ledge of rock, and another higher up. He used them both, but the lower one, a large subterranean room about eight feet high, is still called La Cueva Hermitana (Hermit's Cave).

When he came to Mesilla, Juan always attended Mass. He brought fragrant rosaries made from native plants and exchanged them for cornmeal. At the home of Mariano Barela, then sheriff of Dona Ana County, he visited with Dona Ana Rafaelita, Mariano's mother, and conducted religious services. He never accepted food or lodging, but did give Mrs. Barela the photograph of himself which had been made in New York in 1859.

The Barela home, one of the largest in Mesilla, now houses the Gadsden Museum. It is owned and operated by Elizabeth Fountain Armendariz, descendant of famous New Mexico pioneers. Her grandparents had some of the old hermit's rosaries which she remembers well because they always smelled so nice.

As he had done in Las Vegas, Juan made an arrangement with his friends in Mesilla: if they did not see his signal fire on Friday night, they should come out to the cave to check on him. When the light failed to show one Friday night in July, several men from Mesilla, including Antonio Garcia, Mrs. Armendariz' grandfather, rode out to the cave.

They found the old hermit on his knees in an attitude of prayer, with a crucifix in his hand and a knife wound in his back. Although some people still think Juan was killed by Indians, those who knew him best believed he was murdered by a robber who hoped to find a miser's hoard in the cave.

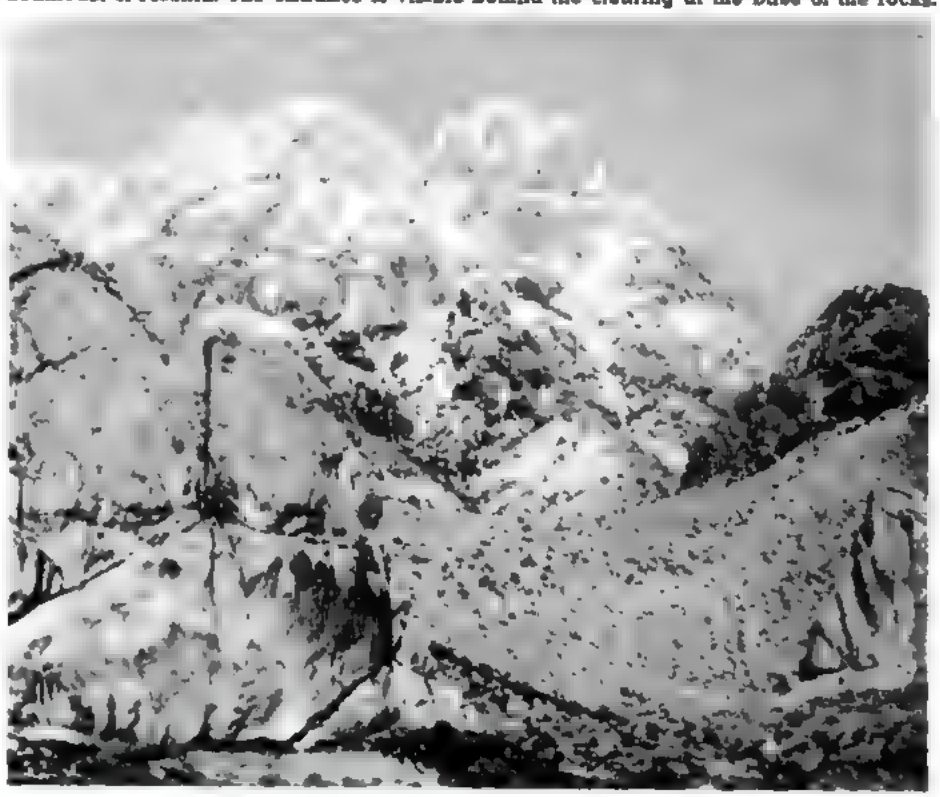
"My grandfather said the men who prepared the body for burial could not remove a metal girdle with spikes in it, which Juan wore around him," Mrs. Armendariz recalls. "He said they could find no trace of food within the cave. Juan's bed had been a blanket spread over a mass of cactus needles."

Despite the hot July weather, the hermit's body showed no sign of decomposition at the time it was found. For this reason, some people are convinced that he was truly a saint. His grave at Mesilla was marked by a cement slab, and by a wooden fence which has since rotted away.

From her grandparents Mrs. Armendariz inherited the wooden cross which the hermit held in death and a diary on which he had been working. Religious authorities who have examined the diary say it is written in ecclesiastical Latin, known only to men who have studied for the priesthood. Both the diary and the photograph are decorated with a dotted insignia which thus far has not been explained.

Mrs. Armendariz' father, Albert F. Fountain, Sr., painted a striking portrait of the old hermit from the now faded 1859 photograph so the likeness of the beloved old man, in the flowing cloak and hood which he always wore, has been preserved. Whether you call him Juan Justiniani, as they did in Mesilla, or Juan de Agostino, as they did in Las Vegas, El Hermitano was no legendary character. He was a real person, whose kind deeds and extraordinary piety have kept his memory alive in all the New Mexico villages which knew him.

La Cueva Hermitana (the hermit's cave) in the Organ Mountains, about twenty miles southeast of Mesilla. The entrance is visible behind the clearing at the base of the rocks.



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Western Gun Collecting

By ARIZONA BOB KUBISTA

This article is True West's answer to the speeding problem. You'll never be able to blast down a highway again for fear of missing that "unlikely" spot to hit the jackpot

A .45 calibre single-action Colt (top), gold-plated .41 calibre Remington over-and-under derringer, and .44 calibre New Model Army Remington cap-and-ball with copper powder flask.

Photos Courtesy the Author

CHASING DOWN guns along the Arizona-Mexico border is full of surprises. You never know what you will turn up next. Anything is possible for the man who is willing and able to travel up dusty desert roads, following a lead or a rumor about some old gun a prospector still has hanging in the rafters of his shack.

I have found genuine Frontier Colts on the same ranch where their original owners have switched to more modern automatics. They had simply oiled and put away the guns their grandfathers had used. Sometimes, too, you can find old guns in obsolete and old calibers lying on a back shelf in some crossroads general store, if you look hard enough. Above all, one thing is necessary—lots of patience.

One of the very first single-action revolvers I ran across I found near Bisbee, right on the Mexican border. I was out hunting and remembered I could use an extra box of .30-30 Winchester cartridges. In a dirty and rundown grocery and general store the owner found some shells of unknown date and doubtful usability on a back shelf—and next to them was this obviously beat-up Colt, covered with dust. After a little bargaining, the Colt was mine and when I got back to the ranch house I began the work of cleaning and restoring my gun. Luckily, the Frontier .44 was old and neglected but not actually damaged or seriously rusted.

After the rust was loosened and removed with bore cleaner, and the grips carefully removed and put aside, the rest of the gun was left to soak in a mixture of gun oil and kerosene. Usually, it is better to soak an old rifle or pistol for a day or so, before proceeding with further disassembly. If you work too fast, rusted screws are torn apart and old springs are cracked or broken. Patience—patience is the word, men.

The more I carefully rubbed the separate parts with extra fine steel wool, being careful not to remove any of the original finish, the more I learned about my "prize." The numbers matched on the frame, trigger guard and on the butt, and the caliber markings on the barrel corresponded with the actual chambers in the cylinder—but it wasn't a Colt after all! The hammer seemed too thin, even allowing for years of use, and the frame and back-strap began to look strange as I fitted the parts back together again.

Eventually, I decided I had bought myself a genuine "Spanish Colt"—one of the many foreign copies you can find in the great Southwest. Reduced charges of regular .44-40 cartridges were tried and when the gun held together, full charges of black powder were used. It worked! Shortly after that, it was traded off to another gun collector and he is happily working on it still.

NO MATTER where you live, somewhere nearby is an old gun not being used. The actual West is the best hunting ground, but many of the old guns you see at antique shows today were found in the Middle West or as far away as New York State. Remember, not every man who sought his fortune out West found it there. Many had to make the long journey back, if they could.

When you go for a drive, stop in at that out-of-the-way hardware store; ask the owner if he has any old guns. If not,

try him again sometime. I always leave behind a postal card that clearly reads "Arizona Bob Kubista—Gun Buyer," in case one turns up.

Taverns and country stores are always good prospects, and so are crossroads gas stations. Ranchers usually have a broken, burnt-out or odd-caliber gun they don't dare shoot anymore. Often they will accept a cash offer or settle for a modern .22 rifle they can use on "jacks." Ask—ask—and ask again. Leave your name, and pay a fair cash price when a gun does turn up. That is one of the more important things about Western gun collecting: don't chisel or cheat.

How much do you pay for an old gun, then? Remember that you are buying a revolver or rifle that you may not be able to use with modern ammunition, or one that may need extensive repairs. It may be an "odd ball" or dangerous to shoot under any circumstances. Not every gun is valuable just because it is old—it can be junk, easily.

I first ask the owner how much he wants for his gun. It is as simple as that. If we can't get together on a cash price, I try a trade. Every man can use a single-barrel shotgun or has a son or nephew who would like a good .22 hunting rifle. But above all—be honest. Never offer a five dollar bill for a perfect Remington cap-and-ball revolver.

Not all guns have to be bought, either. A very interesting Winchester 1866 lever-action rifle found near here was pulled out of an old adobe wall. That was at Fort Bowie, near Dos Cabezas in Southern Arizona in the Chiricahua Mountains. A school-teacher friend, George Polka, was looking for traces of the Butterfield Stage Route on a hot day in August, 1961. He stopped in the shade of a weathered adobe wall that was once part of a house. To his surprise, he saw an octagon-shaped piece of metal sticking up. When he wiggled it loose and pulled it out, it turned out to be the barrel and brass frame of a .44 rim fire Winchester model 1866! So you see, it still happens.

Don't ever let anyone tell you there still aren't guns to be found. True, many have been gathered into large collections and are out of the reach of us ordinary folk. But hardly a week goes by that I don't hear of another gun, or that someone doesn't stop off with an odd ball.

IN ONE long weekend, on a drive from Tucson to Tombstone and to Nogales and back, I returned with a back seat loaded with assorted guns. Most of them were not much good, but some were desirable additions. I ended up with five pistols, in different types and calibers. There was one Colt single-action revolver with a seven and one-half inch barrel in .45 long Colt caliber that had a set of very fine stag grips. The other cartridge pistol was a little Remington two-shot derringer in .41 caliber with the original ivory grips, and it was gold-plated, too!

Usually my luck does not run this good, but that weekend I also found three black-powder pistols in working condition. The best of the lot was a .31 caliber cap-and-ball model 1849 Colt revolver with a three and seven-eighths inch octagon barrel. What was nice about this little revolver was the brass backstraps and the five-shot cylinder, all with matching numbers and in shooting

(Continued on page 70)

A modern "Buntline Special" .45 calibre Colt with twelve-inch barrel (top), a double-barrel .44 calibre cap-and-ball pistol, and .31 calibre Model 1849 Colt cap-and-ball revolver with octagon barrel.

A close-up of the Colt and Remington revolvers pictured on the opposite page.

Virginia City's Strange Chinese Trial

By JEAN MICHAEL MOORE

Ah Yen and Ah Wah were up for murder, but all that resulted was a loss of white roosters—and plenty of chicken pie

Photos Courtesy B. A. Browning, Montana Chamber of Commerce

TRIALS were always well attended during the early days in Montana Territory. Housewives welcomed them as an escape from the monotony of housework, and businessmen as an excuse for a middle-of-the-week holiday. It was an unwritten law that all business houses close down at such a time to eliminate "unfair competition."

It was not uncommon for many spectators to come equipped with light bedding and basket lunches which were placed on benches to establish a sort of squatter's rights for the duration of an unusual or lengthy court case.

The so-called Chinese trials in Virginia City in 1879 and 1880 were perfect examples of such entertainment. Held in a log cabin courthouse large enough to accommodate less than one third of the citizens wanting admission, they were without question one of the most irregular to come before a territorial jury.

The crime responsible for the first trial was conceived in Virginia City's Chinese temple, a combination fraternity house, church, gambling place, and brothel for approximately 600 Chinese. The impressive landmark which stood at the entrance of Virginia City and reached high into the heavens was an unexpected bit of the Orient and truly out of place amid the hurried rush of Western mining progress. It was the center of Chinese social activities, and no expense had been spared in its building.

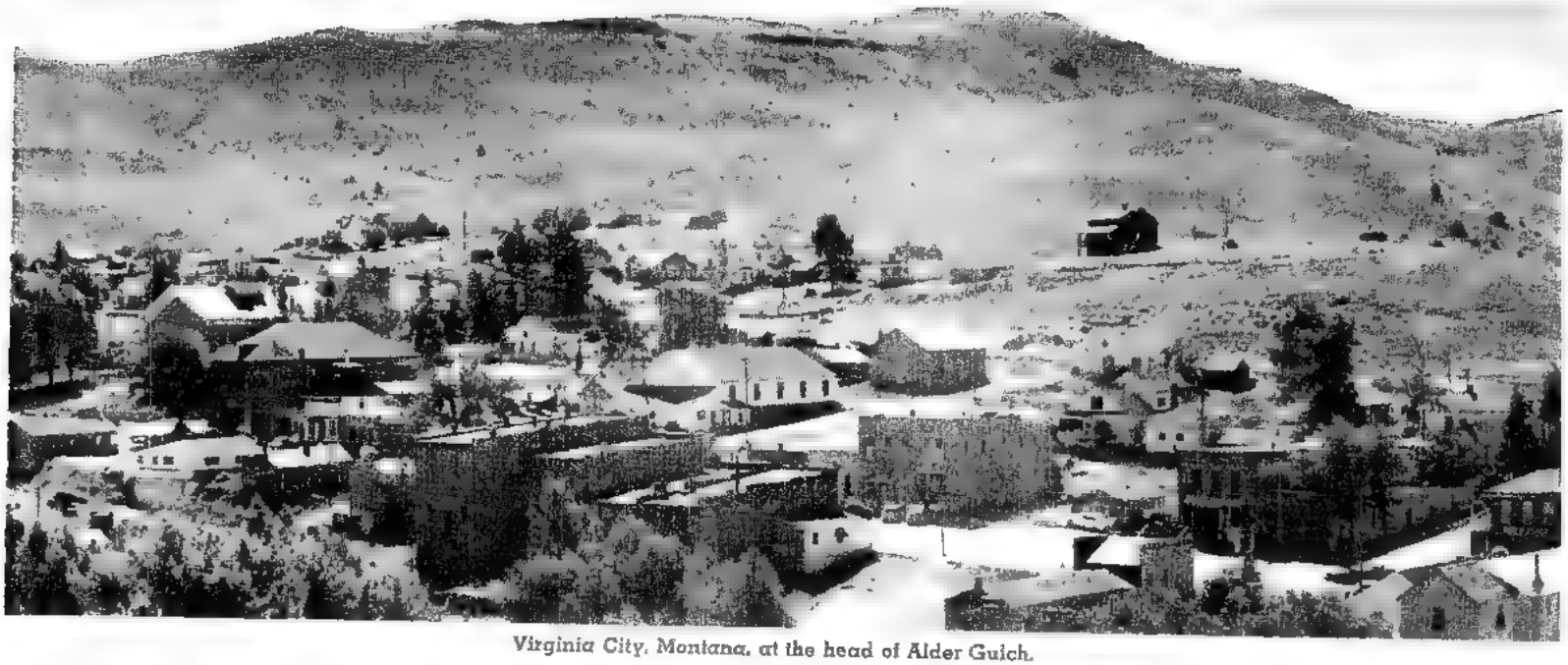
The old Chinese Temple in Virginia City, located at the foot of Wallace Street.

During the daytime its occupants were overworked, somber little yellow men, hated by most of the white miners who resented them for their ability to grub out fortunes which they themselves had left in their search for greener pastures. At night, inside the sanctity of their temple, the Chinese were important, for it was here that they fraternized, counseled and sat in judgment upon wayward brothers. One large room housed a variety of Chinese gods, another room was devoted to ceremonies suited to the Chinese Bacchus, and in another room temple brothers kowtowed before the great joss and paid their respects to Buddha that their prosperity might be assured for a long time. Several rooms were also reserved for the comfort of those who wished to drift off into a land of fantasy on the fumes of the red poppy.

Murder was said to have been committed within the temple walls. How many murders were covered up no white man ever knew. To be sure, there were many mysterious deaths, but whether burying friend or foe, the Chinese always conducted themselves with pomp and ceremony. Friends and enemies followed the corpse to the grave under a shower of red paper strips upon which mystic characters were written. These were designed, of course, to frighten away any lurking devils and to give the soul that had just been released from worldly cares (either through a natural death or a planned one), a fine send-off to the land of his ancestors. To questions asked by inquisitive white men concerning a sudden death, a standard statement was that the deceased had met death by choking on a chicken bone.

SIX CHINESE companies operated in Alder Gulch, and every Chinese in the gulch was a member of one or the other of them. It was never definitely known that the Virginia City companies were connected with the six great Chinese tongs in San Francisco, but the impression prevailed that they were.

At the head of each of these companies was a martinet, and his word was law among his followers. The members' quarrels were settled not by themselves but by the head men. Quarrels caused by differences over leases increased until gradually two factions grew up in the Chinese fraternity house, and four companies aligned themselves against two.



Virginia City, Montana, at the head of Alder Gulch.

The white residents of Virginia City described these factions as the Four Company and the Two Company groups.

A feeling of intense hatred developed and, unable to settle their differences peaceably, they engaged in open warfare when the Two Company group secured control of a choice lease of unusually rich ground which the Four Company had tried desperately to get.

A conference was held by the heads of Four Company in which they came to the decision that Two Company should either surrender this coveted lease or fight. The Two Company group replied to the demand by entrenching themselves about the ground in question. Each man in Two Company was supplied with a rifle and considerable ammunition. Four Company also armed its men and the battle was on!

It was a desperate fight. For two days the gulch was under constant fire. There were about 200 men fighting on the side of the Two Company group and about 400 men fighting on the other. People coming into or leaving Virginia City found it necessary to detour over the hills to avoid the battle zone. Thousands of shots were exchanged, but owing to the poor marksmanship of the participants there were no casualties—not even a powder burn.

At last all of the ammunition was exhausted with no victory for either side. Four Company decided to revert to ancient Chinese warfare. Its members sharpened shovels, pitchforks, and made stink bombs and pikes. For added appeal the warriors wore ferocious looking masks. To the tune of inhuman screaming, they took the redoubts of the Two Company with little trouble and the conquered group suffered two casualties. A small Two Company Chinese fled down the gulch pursued by a tall Four Company Chinese, armed with a sharpened shovel. The small man finally stumbled and fell, and his adversary removed his head.

HEARING about the shovel casualty, the sheriff of Madison County decided

(Continued on page 42)

Old Wells Fargo stage still sits in front of blacksmith shop in Virginia City, Montana.

UINTA YARNS

By DICK and VIVIAN DUNHAM

A troop of Negro Cavalry on bivouac at Vernal. Photos Courtesy Thorne Studios

DID YOU ever hear how Spirit Lake got its name? Jim Lamb told us this one as he got it from the Indians. A group of Shoshone bucks went off on a little hunting party up in the Ballies. One of them was following an elk trail and along toward dusk, he came to a big lake surrounded by pines. He decided he'd better spend the night there, and go on hunting in the morning. He wrapped up in his blanket at the foot of a pine and went to sleep.

All of a sudden, a noise woke him up. It sounded like a bell ringing, deep and sort of muffled. The moon had just come up and was slipping along behind some clouds, and the lake was all sort of misty. He got up and looked out at the water where the sound seemed to come from. There, down under the black surface of the lake, he saw a herd of white elk moving along. The leader was wearing the bell that gave off that solemn, muffled note.

Terrified, the Indian plunged off through the woods, not looking or caring where he was going. Two or three days later the rest of the party found him. He was still pretty much out of his mind from fear of what he'd seen. After he'd been fed and rested a bit, he managed to tell his companions about his experience but the poor chap was never quite right in his mind after that. The other Indians recognized the lake from his description, and named it Spirit Lake. The Shoshones always gave it a wide berth, especially at night.

Nobody else has ever seen those white elk, as far as we know, but if you listen on a still summer night, you can sometimes hear that muffled bell ringing, way down under the surface of the lake.

The first time any officer of the law was ever known to stick his head into Brown's Park was when one of the Hoys swore out a warrant for the arrest of Isom Dart. The sheriff in Rock Springs didn't like the idea of trying to serve the warrant, so he deputized Joe Philbrick, who was supposed to be the toughest man in town and was said to be wanted in three states.

Just how Joe handled it isn't known, but he got his man and started back to town with Isom in a buckboard. On their way in, the buckboard slid down a bank, and Joe, Isom, the horses, and the buckboard all landed in a heap at the bottom of a wash. Joe was out cold but Isom caught the frightened horses, pulled the buckboard off Philbrick, patched him up, and drove into town. There Isom surrendered himself to the sheriff, who promptly clapped him into jail.

When Philbrick came to and heard about it, he was plenty mad. Any man, he figured, who'd do what Isom had done, deserved to go free. The jury evidently agreed with him, for they promptly acquitted Isom, rustler or not.

Joe Tolliver was finally made town marshal down in Vernal. Presumably, the idea was that one Brown's Park badman could handle any number of local toughs. Joe was a good marshal while he was sober, but unfortunately he seldom attained that condition more than once or twice a year.

One day, so the story goes, Joe was in the tonsorial parlor getting himself spruced up. He started boasting about what all he was going to do to clean the town up, and started to brandish his six-shooter around to emphasize the point.

"Better put that gun away before you hurt somebody," the barber suggested, mildly.

"Hell," yelled Tolliver, "the thing's perfectly safe. Look!" And with that, he pointed the gun at his head and pulled the trigger. And that was Tolliver's last shave, close or otherwise.

"ONE TIME when I was about seven or eight," Jim Lamb began, "a Ute Indian named Crazy John came up to Bridger from the White Rocks Agency, and brought his young squaw with him. He bought a gallon of firewater to take back to sell, but he sort of miscalculated and got most of it aboard himself. He came over to our cabin and wanted to stay all night, but my father persuaded him to go down to Uncle Jack's Indian camp just below us.

"When he got there, he suddenly got the idea that it was time to beat up his squaw. She fooled him, though: She sneaked out and came back to our place. My father told her she could spread her blanket by the fireplace if she wanted to stay, so that's what she did.

"We'd just about got off to sleep when we heard somebody outside shaking the door pretty hard. I was afraid he'd break it down, so I got up and let him in. It was Crazy John, and he was on the warpath for sure. He had a big old butcher knife with him, and he was waving it around.

" 'Me cut-em squaw's head off,' he told us, and started to do it.

"Now my father was a pretty mild man usually, and never fought much, but he sure got pretty cranky at that. He told that buck to lie down and behave himself and go to sleep. The old fellow was crazy drunk and didn't pay any attention, he just kept dodging around trying to get his hands on the squaw.

"There was a hatchet with a long handle over by the fireplace, so while they were ducking around the cabin, I got hold of that and sneaked up and knocked him one on the head with it. He stretched out flat, and he sure looked like a dead Indian for a few minutes.

" 'Now you've played hell for sure,' my father told me. 'Them other Indians'll come up and kill us all.'

"That sort of scared me, and kid-like, I started to bawl. I sure felt mighty relieved when John came to and started to get up.

" 'Lie down,' my father told him, real sharp. I guess the old buck thought he meant it this time, for he grunted, rolled up in his blanket, and went off to sleep.

"In the morning we gave 'em something to eat. Crazy John seemed to be mighty anxious to pull out and get back home. Well, it seems they got as far as Young's Springs that night, and camped there. Crazy John piled into the rest of

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Campfire talk. We're not saying it's all true, we're just saying, "That's the way we heard it"!

Vernal, Utah, around 1900.

that whiskey jug. Then, he didn't do a thing to that squaw but take his knife and cut the fingers off both her hands, and then take a firebrand and burn the ends so's she wouldn't bleed to death.

"Well, when they got back to the agency, the squaw told the other Indians what he'd done. They grabbed hold of him, and held him down while they got a ring, heated it, and branded him with it right on the forehead. After that, he was always sort of an outcast. His squaw left him, and none of the other Indians'd have a thing to do with him."

FOR MANY YEARS, Daggett County had a real hermit. He was Amos Hill, a lean, lanky, grizzled old fellow who lived in a little wickiup down between Trail and Allen Creeks. He lived there for more than twenty years, raising a little garden, and doing some placer mining down along the Green River in Red Canyon. It was a never-failing source of astonishment to parties making a boat trip down the river to run onto him there.

His house, no bigger than a dog kennel, was built over a hole in the ground leaving earthen steps for him to sit on close to his little fire. He had a series of zigzag ditches by means of which he irrigated a garden, a small alfalfa patch, and a little patch of corn almost smothered by sweet clover. He had a few cattle to care for, but he spent most of his time panning the river sand.

For clothes, Amos wore ragged overalls and a piece of canvas with a hole cut out for his head. His boots were made of fifteen-inch squares of rawhide laced to old rubber boot uppers. Two or three times a year he would make a trip to Linwood or Vernal with a pack horse to get supplies. He had formerly been a rancher up near Lonetree. Even there he had been a bit moody and solitary, and finally he had moved down into the remote river canyon to be by himself. He got friendly with the people who settled at Greendale, and when James Swett moved away, Amos left his hermit's hideout and went along with him. Amos was over eighty at the time.

And do you know about the "Bucket of Gold?" It must have been in '98, because Solomon was away fighting in Cuba at the time, that there was a train robbery on the U.P., north of here. Maybe it was at Fish Cut, or maybe at Point of Rocks; it doesn't really matter much. Anyway, the robbers lit out for the mountains, but they were pretty closely pursued by a posse. Up at Conner Basin, the pack horse carrying the treasure—which was estimated at $85,000 in gold coin and bullion—gave out, and the outlaws "borrowed" a fresh one which happened to be an old roan called Cleveland, belonging to Solomon.

Charley Brant was up in Long's Park at the time, and saw those fellows coming along. He recognized old Cleveland, and started over to investigate. The outlaws pulled their guns, so Charley made tracks out of there in a hurry. He said afterward that he recognized one of the party as "Red Bob," and he knew it wouldn't be healthy to linger around there.

Well, the posse caught up with the gang over near Vernal, rounded them up, and stuck them in jail. They were tried, found guilty and sentenced to the pen. But they'd got rid of the gold somewhere along the line, and the authorities couldn't persuade them to tell where it was.

The discovery of a metal bucket over in Dowd's Hole, with the painted letters, "U.P." on it, aroused great speculation and excitement. Several people tried digging around, but all they got for their trouble was a few extra callouses, and after a while the excitement died down.

About two years after the robbery, a Negro showed up in the district and lodged himself in an old cabin over near McKinnon. He was generally known as Nigger Turner, and for years afterward, McKinnon was known as "Coon Holler" in honor of his stay there. He was observed to go up through Conner Basin with a shovel, and spent a lot of time roaming around the mountains. It was remembered that there was a Negro in the original holdup gang. Turner wasn't the same man, but interest in the treasure hunt revived. Nigger Turner stayed around a couple of years, and then disappeared as suddenly and unexpectedly as he'd come. What had happened?

Well, Ole Nielsen used to tell that Turner came over to him one day and confided in him. He'd been in the pen, and while there, another Negro had told him about hiding the gold, and had drawn him a map showing where it was

(Continued on page 72)

"Crazy John, the Indian who laid out the year round, for forty-eight years, two miles above Whiterocks. In normal years the snow reached a depth of two-and-one-half feet, and he would move his fire around in a small circle and sit where the ground was warm. Sometimes he would go to sleep and fall over and they would have to chop his hair loose from the ice and snow in the morning. His people would throw scraps of food to him as you would feed a dog. The writer has seen him many times: twice he had rocks in his hands hunting rabbits as far as a mile and a half from his camp. Once he had just returned with a rabbit and it was lying beside the fire. I have often wished I could have spied on him to see how he cooked it. Once in a while his friends would put up a canvas wickiup, but he would burn it when night came. I once saw him with an old overshoe on his left foot, the only item of clothing I ever saw him wear."

—Leo Thorne

GOOD COMPANY

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ THE MEMOIRS OF LUKE D. COSGRAVE ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The life of an actor in the "good old days" was short on glamor and long on work. It could be risky, too, for frontier audiences often left their good manners at home!

Luke Cosgrave

Photos Courtesy Frances Hurlbutt

Editor's Note: A seven-year-old boy in County Mayo, Ireland, chanced to read a book about the Mormons—and was deeply moved by his first taste of the theater when a group of strolling players came to town. He developed an urge to know more about those strange people across the sea, and definitely felt a desire to act.

The boy was Luke Cosgrave, known later to thousands of Americans as a trouper of the board- and false-front towns of the West. At fifteen he was giving dramatic readings up and down California's gold camps. In all, he toured the "wild country" for thirty years and these experiences were recorded in his book, *Theatre Tonight* (House Warven, Publishers) from which our story is taken.

WE HAD, truly, a good company in 1888, and we wasted no time putting it to work. We opened our new season with three farces and the usual songs. At Deming, New Mexico, we found a young actor named Bill Eastman, and were soon able to do a few dramas.

We played the little hamlets, doing our farces—"The Yankee Duelist," "The Fellow That Looks Like Me," "Paddy Miles, the Limerick Boy," while rehearsing "Dora," "Peck's Bad Boy," and doing what we could between times to advertise and arrange transportation—the busiest few weeks I ever had in show business. Miss George was a heroine, working night and day, driving the young people all they could stand. We had a date of four nights in the new copper camp of Bisbee, Arizona, where we arrived two days ahead of time to rehearse our comedies.

Bisbee was in its infancy, built of shacks and temporary buildings, with a long line of strangers each day at the post office. There were canvas walls in the hotel (great listening posts), and a big wide shack to give our shows in. We opened in "Dora," and did "Peck's Bad Boy" on the second and fourth nights and our farces on the third. Our new organization seemed to get by well enough in the new town. Miss Grace (now Rena Marcells) did "Peck's Bad Boy" in a light blue velvet peasant boy suit with a wide white collar. I did Father Peck. In "Dora" I had a chance to study and develop the great part of Farmer Allen, he of the iron will.

A few miles from us, at the Bird Cage Theatre in Tombstone, W. A. Brady, father of Alice Brady, was playing "The Lights of London" and H. Rider Haggard's "She." At Bisbee I got a letter giving me a later date in the great city of Phoenix for our celebrated comedy, "Kathleen Mavourneen."

The military post—the beautiful Fort Huachuca below the great mountain—was the finest we had yet seen. Everything seemed bright and new—electric lights, well-kept lawns, substantially-built quarters. After the deranged appearance of the new camp, Bisbee, it was refreshing to get into an atmosphere where everyone seemed to be living according to rule. And as a result of the hard grind of the past three weeks, we were ready for two days of bugle calls, guard mounts, drills, raising and lowering of the colors, and the guns at sunrise and sunset.

Two recruits ran away into the mountains after bayonet exercises because the Irish drill sergeant threatened to put them in the guardhouse for inattention. When they were brought back before the strict disciplinarian, Captain King, they said they really liked the army but hated the ugly sloping cap which the service compelled them to wear. I was pleased to learn that the severe Captain King permitted the young prisoners, under guard, to witness on our last night so educational a play as "Peck's Bad Boy."

Fairbanks, near the Mexican border, was our next prospect—and when we arrived that morning it looked like a drab one. We were able to rent a furnished house a little way out; our playhouse was an empty store with a low platform at the back, and no scenery or seats of any kind. The first thing we did was put up our few rags of scenery. They stood about eight feet high, leaving quite a space to the ceiling. We borrowed four coal oil lamps for footlights, and made up by candles.

While the boys were preparing the stage, I tried to find seats. I got boards, but nothing to set them on. In some towns I had been able to find empty beer kegs, but there were none in Fairbanks.

What liquor they drank came in bottles. No chairs could be had except a few to use on the stage. It was getting late and hot. At last, behind a warehouse, I found a pile of five-gallon oil cans. The man about the place said I could have all I could use. I got them over and put the boards on them for benches. They rattled a little. I was afraid they might make a disturbing noise, but we couldn't help that.

WE OPENED with "Peck's Bad Boy," as everybody had heard of it. The stage was unusually crowded with our trunks along the wall at the back, but we managed. A noisy, talking crowd came. I feared for the stability of the oil cans. They seemed to hold their own through three lively acts and the songs, but got a little crackly during the farce.

After the last curtain we heard a little murmuring, then someone said, "Don't go yet, folks. Let us hear a few words from Colonel Quinn."

Then the Colonel began, "It is customary, when a star comes to a community and gives such a delightful entertainment as we have witnessed tonight, to make a presentation of flowers or some other acceptable gift."

"But there are no flowers in Fairbanks, Colonel, except artificial flowers, and we can't get at them now."

"Then why not present the lady with some nice fruit?"

"But, Colonel, there is no fruit in Fairbanks but canned fruit and we can't get that now. But here are the cans. Why not present them right now!" Then the racket began—the rattle of the cans coming over the top of the curtain.

Miss Grace screamed, "Where's Luke? Why doesn't he go out and stop them? If Mr. George was here, he'd stop it!"

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"Wait till I get a chance," I chimed in. "It's their turn now."

When someone said, "Come on out, Miss Rena, and acknowledge our favors," I stepped in front of the curtains.

"Ladies and gentlemen (the ladies were now gone), permit me to say Miss Marcells is very grateful for this original way of expressing your approval. It is a new way but, if it is your way, she is satisfied, and tomorrow night she will appear in her greatest part—Lady Isabel in 'East Lynne' at the request of the people of Fairbanks!"

At home that night Miss George was very much disturbed by the wild demonstration. But when Will Eastman and I agreed to set up cots outside for the night and guard the portals like good eastern slaves, she grew mellow. She retold the stories of Mrs. John Drew and the Arch Street Theatre, of the English star, Mr. George Rignold, in "Henry V," kneeling at the altar as he cursed and damned the property man for not having the candles lighted. "And him kneeling before the Lord in prayer—the sacrilegious villain!"

The next morning, after the unruly roughhouse the night before, we were able to borrow a few benches from the schoolhouse, and a lot of folks carried their own chairs. Many more ladies came. After the "East Lynne" scenes, Miss Grace bowed as she received a funny artificial wreath on which someone had pinned Colonel Quinn's name, and it all wound up in a lot of fun.

It was now April and getting warm. Phoenix was our only chance to make it through the desert to California. If we could only get the manager to stand for our advertising and make a display that would bring the business!

WE PLAYED the villages of Wilcox and Benson. That brought us to Tucson, where we did "Kathleen Mavourneen" to break it in for our one-night stand in Phoenix. Leaving the company here, I proceeded to Phoenix to prepare for our engagement and convince the management that we could adequately advertise our attraction, although the only paper I could show was thirteen half-sheet lithographs, and a few handbills.

Mr. Patton, the local manager, was a tall, active, strictly-business New England gentleman. When he asked to see my paper I had to do a lot of talking to prevent cancellation of our date. I promised if he would let me go ahead, I would cover each of his seven billboards with attractive paper and if he was not satisfied, I would not ask for the date.

Then he inquired how many people we had. Before I thought, I told him seven, hoping we would pick up another man somewhere. "Why," he said, "that's a thirteen-cast play." I told him we'd been doing it all season and he told me to go ahead, but if the novel billing I spoke of did not prove attractive, he would call the whole thing off. I thanked him for the opportunity and told him I would do my best.

Going to a paint store, I bought a lot of odd rolls of wallpaper and got a bill poster to cover all seven boards with the colored wallpaper, over which I had a sign painter print in large blue letters:

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN
OPERA HOUSE
Saturday, April 23rd

When Mr. Patton saw the display he said, "You win, but heaven help you if you don't put the show across!"

The last attraction there had been Augustin Daly's New York success, "Night Off," under the management of James Beauford, with whom, years later, I had a season doing "Faust" through the Middle West.

Newspaper ads and hand bills were distributed, made us known. We did the play and the farce, "The Quiet Family." Miss Marcells sang. The audience laughed often, stayed with us and seemed to be amused—but I imagine not in the same mood as when witnessing Daly's "Night Off."

I was very much afraid the newspaper boys would not take us seriously, so as soon as the last curtain was down, I got to the morning paper, asking the young man who covered the event to please be careful what he said about our attraction.

He looked a little quizzical. "Your, ah—"

"Attraction. We attracted a crowd."

"And so you did. Or your billing. Well, what do you want me to say?"

"Say what you like, but please say it in one line, because we have a hot, sandy desert to cross to get to California. Tell it all in one line."

Then he introduced me to the evening paper critic, who kindly offered to do the same. I left that night to bill Florence, where I got the morning and evening papers. Sure enough, they had one line each at the head of the paper in bold-face type: DID YOU SEE THE SHOW?

I rode out to Fort Lowell, another interesting military post, with the mail carrier, an enlisted man, who gave me mighty useful information about getting permission to play. When I explained my business to the Commander and showed him our advertising, he said with a smile, "I see you are a permanent organization with experience and may be able to present the plays."

An orderly showed me where to post the bills and where the company would be quartered. A neat little adobe building was fitted up for a theater. Good seats, heavy oil-painted canvas scenery tacked on two-by-four frames, but no footlights. The quartermaster supplied us with plenty of short, thick candles which gave us a different glow and glamor. Miss Marcells wore all the spangled and bright-colored dresses she had.

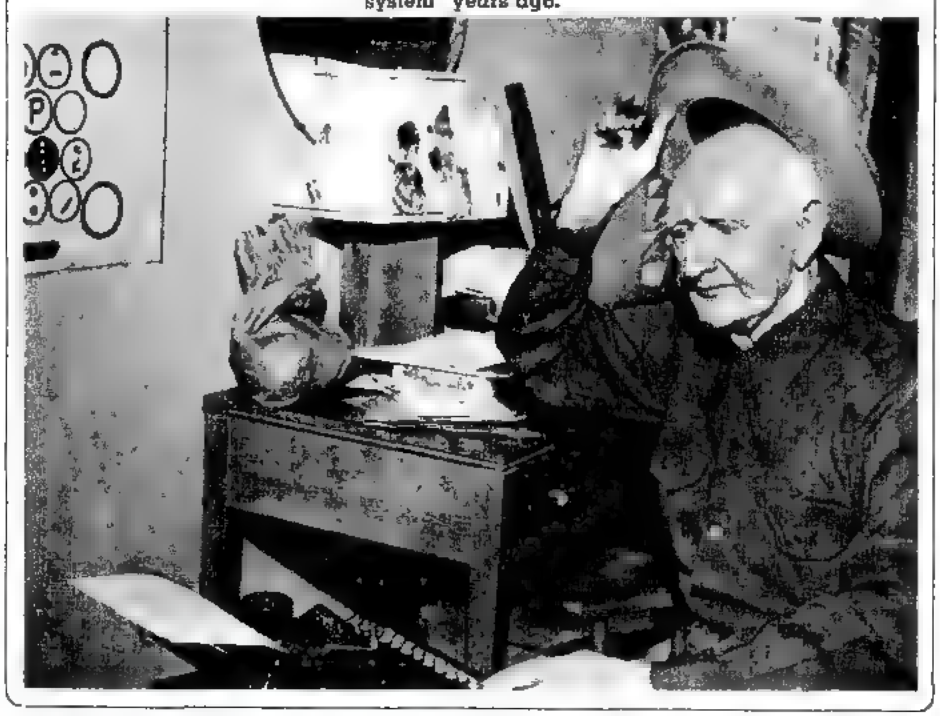
When the quartermaster's orderly came back to see us, he said he thought our little show would have difficulty getting to California. He would advise the men to enlist at Fort Lowell, and the women to make their way back to their homes, wherever they might be. I told him that kind of talk would only impede our progress, and asked if he knew anyone around the country who would advise us about the road on which we were traveling. He said there was a great person who had the hotel at Casa Grande named Major Pauline Cushman, of the Federal Secret Service during the Civil War. It would be well for us to meet her.

FLORENCE, a village on the Gila River, had a Pima Indian Mission and a church a mile from town. While putting up the advertising, a fine looking Pima marched past us into town, barefoot, his blue trouser legs rolled up, an Indian scarf over his shoulder. His squaw walked a few yards behind with a great roped bundle on her back, her husband's boots laid across the top.

The manager thought I could get comfortable quarters for the company at Mrs. Cosgrave's. Mrs. Cosgrave—a full-blooded Pima Indian—invited me in, and I had to show her my name on the show bill before she would believe I was her cousin. Her husband, Pat Cosgrave, a blacksmith, had been killed several years before in an Apache raid. Her daughter Margaret had auburn hair and something like an Irish smile. They were glad to get tickets, liked the show, and told me to my face that I was a good actor. I allowed I liked to hear it, but didn't expect my own family to go bragging about it!

(Continued on page 72)

Luke Cosgrave, at age 87, writing his memoirs by the hunt-and-peck system. He said, "If I had known I would live so long I would have learned the touch system years ago."



OLD FORTS and Buried Treasures

By WILLIAM MAHAN

Troopers didn't have much "treasure" to bury, but there's excitement in prowling around the old outposts—in looking down to find a rusty canteen, a coin, a button from an old uniform . . .

Above, author Bill Mahan (left) and T. W. Clark exhibit a fruit jar's cache of old coins. Right, Mahan with his "snuff-glass treasure," three snuff glasses full of old coins.

Photos Courtesy the Author

I AWOKE with a start and finally managed to shut off the double-bell alarm clock. It was 3:30 a.m. and I was to meet my partner, T. W. Clark, in an hour to leave on my longest treasure hunt since moving back to Texas. It was blowing and raining; in November anything can happen.

We planned to stop at a couple of places in the state and then go on to New Mexico. It was turning cold fast—a good indication of an ice storm, the kind Texas is famous for at that time of year. Fortunately, we were headed south on the first leg of our trip and would very soon get ahead of it (I thought). I had loaded the wagon the night before so, after a quick cup of scalding black coffee, I headed out.

T. W. was ready to go but was a little worried about the weather. Our first stop was to be San Angelo. We wanted to check out a story that we had heard a lot about—a cave that had been found many years ago by a cavalryman stationed at a nearby fort. It seems that he was returning to the fort slightly "under the influence" and was riding down the river instead of taking the usual trail. About a mile below town he stopped his horse to roll a cigarette and noticed a partially covered entrance to a cave in the riverbank at about the level of his head while sitting on his horse. There was a small ledge in front of the entrance. Being curious and slightly drunk, he climbed upon the ledge and partly into the cave. As he paused, with head and shoulders inside, he heard a rattlesnake and lit a match.

Back in the cave was a den of large rattlers and against one wall, gleaming dully in the glow of the match, he could see the golden contents spilling from some rotten buckskin bags. He backed out as quickly as possible, shaken and sobered by what he had seen.

The soldier was due to be transferred to another fort. He returned to where he thought the cave was located but everything looked different when he was sober. The cavalryman was later killed in action against the Indians, a little while after he had written his brother back East. The brother reportedly made a trip to San Angelo but was never able to find the rattlesnake cave.

FROM SAN ANGELO we drove out to the old fort and then back to town trying to trace the probable path that the trooper could have taken. We learned that in the intervening years there had been several severe floods and the banks of the Concho had been washed completely away in some places.

The river was up pretty high while we were there and that made a good search impossible. For about a mile the south bank is covered with brush and is almost vertical from the water's edge, so we decided that we would wait until a dry year and go back when we had plenty of time to look.

From San Angelo our trail was to lead to Old Fort McKavett located about twenty miles west of Menard on Highway 864. We took what was supposed to be a shortcut and boy, what a road! In places it ran down creek beds and was just as rough as you could find. It was the day before the deer season opened and we counted about fifty along that little used back road. The deer were not at all afraid and just stood and looked as we went by. I wished for the old 348 Winchester that was back home but I guess it would have only got me in

trouble, even though a good venison roast would have been most welcome.

When we finally arrived at old Fort McKavett, I was surprised that so many of the buildings were still in good repair and in use. Of course, some were in ruins and a few buildings had been demolished and used to repair others. We made a good friend at a tavern called "The Fort." He had lived around there for over forty years.

Fort McKavett was established in 1852 by the U.S. War Department as protection against the Indians. Menard County is rich in early history and quite a bit of treasure has been found from time to time. One mile west of the town is the site of Mission Santa Cruz De San Saba, founded among the Lipan Apaches by Franciscan priests in 1757. It was sacked and left in ruins by the Comanches in 1758. This whole area is good treasure hunting country and it is possible to find relics and artifacts in almost any pasture around the old campsites.

We confined our searching to the fort area and the civilian settlement, but with just average luck. We found the usual army buttons, empty brass cartridge cases and some old army canteens, all flattened and rusty. A few coins were scattered around and it is not unusual to find an occasional small cache, possibly some soldier's savings. We were told that every spring the Mexican goat herders and the kids around the fort area are always bringing in single gold coins to sell, which had been uncovered by the spring rains.

I happen to know of one real good find in gold coins in the old civilian town area and suspect that to spend some time searching the campgrounds around the fort could be very profitable. It would be necessary to have a very sensitive metal detector and work slowly, as it is easy to miss the occasional gold coin buried three or four inches deep.

We did not stay too long around Fort McKavett as we had other places to go and a couple of days was all that we could spare. I did hear about a large gun cache in the area, however, that I intend to look for at a later date.

OUR NEXT STOP was Fort Lancaster farther west in Crockett County. This is rough country with mountains, buttes and canyons. The fort is located at the foot of a high plateau and at the edge of very rugged terrain. The ruins are thirty-three miles west of Ozona on U.S. Highway 290. This fort was established by the Army in 1855 to protect overland travel from San Antonio to California. It was abandoned in 1861 and reactivated for a short time in 1868.

As it is located near a major highway, the area has been pretty well cleaned out. Even the few graves we found had been dug up, and the whole place is covered with holes dug by treasure hunters.

We had camped the night before on a high plateau overlooking the valley and the fort. The rain and cold had finally caught up with us. At the time we camped, about 10:00 p.m., there was a steady downpour and the temperature was dropping. The wind had got up and it was extremely disagreeable weather. I had my wagon fully equipped and had curtains for the back so we just opened it up and rolled out the sleeping bags in the wagon. Not all the comforts of home—but a wonderful night to be out if you really like the outdoors.

Next morning building a fire to cook breakfast was easy as I always carry a couple of coffee cans full of pitch pine shavings. The old black coffee pot was boiling in nothing flat. Breakfast consisted of large portions of ham, a half dozen eggs and a pan of hot biscuits, my specialty. By the time we had cleaned up the camp and packed for travel, the rain had stopped but the wind was blowing harder and colder.

We went on down to Fort Lancaster. Our luck was not all bad but the weather was so bad we only stayed about five hours. At that, the trip had already paid off and we could have gone home showing a nice profit. That is what we should have done, as it turned out, but we had hopes of a big pay-off over in New Mexico so away we went.

Before we reached El Paso it was snowing, at times so hard that we could only crawl along and barely see the road. Having just moved from Colorado I was accustomed to the three- and four-feet snows of the mountains so we didn't stop. We plowed through El Paso in a blinding storm, and arrived in Deming about 10:00 p.m. It was still snowing and T. W. wistfully suggested that maybe we should stay in a motel. I hastily agreed.

We were very eager to get into the mountains and sat up most of the night looking over and discussing our loot, and looking ahead with eagerness to the rest of our trip.

The next morning we found that we had come through the worst blizzard in years and that cars were stranded in the desert and especially in the mountains. The mountains were where we had to go.

We decided it might be a good idea to stay in Deming a few days and wait on the weather, so we started out just "prospecting." In prospecting I like to walk around town, contact the old-timers, get them to talking, and then follow up on all leads that sound reasonable. I also like to prowl around and hunt out lost and forgotten gold camps, campsites, and any old abandoned trails or settlements. Usually anything close to the highway and publicized has been overrun with treasure hunters already and you are lucky to find even a horseshoe nail.

I BOUGHT an old fellow a couple of drinks in a local bar and learned about a recluse who had had a little gold claim in the hills up Silver City way. It was a placer claim and apparently the old fellow would never sell his gold in the same place twice, so no one actually knew how rich the mine was or how much he took out. The story was dramatic, as usual, with the teller getting lost in a blizzard and finding his way to the miner's shack in the foothills and having to stay several days to wait out the storm. It continued with the miner's getting up in the night and carrying out a suspicious looking package, going out to his burro barn and staying about thirty minutes, and then quietly returning to the cabin without his package. Several years later the miner was found dead in his cabin, and no gold of any value was ever found. Shortly thereafter the teller of the tale was in the vicinity and found that the cabin had burned and hardly any signs remained.

He was willing to give me exact directions but didn't I think he should have a bottle for the next night? I agreed that it would be forthcoming and he set to work laboriously drawing a detailed map. I wondered if it was worthwhile but, as we had nothing to do, decided to give it a try for you never can tell what will turn up while prospecting.

The snow was melting fast and we were at the old site before noon. The map was surprisingly accurate and easy to follow. There was only one discrepancy. Where he showed the burro barn to be was an old well with some charred boards lying over it. After looking the ground over carefully I decided that, according to old foundation stones, the well had been in one end of the stall. So the search began. We found all sorts of trash, rusted plates, bent-up pans, railroad spikes, muleshoes and all the other discards that can accumulate around an old cabin. I went over the site of the shed several times and was about to give up, as it was already dark, but thought I should check out what would have been the path between the well and the cabin door. I had not covered that part as yet. Exactly half-way between

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Marker for a common grave near old Fort Cummings, northeast of Deming, New Mexico.

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Fishing Time On

By FRED GIPSON

Illustration by Al Martin Napoletano

ON THE MORNING of the great day, none of us children had to be called a second time. When Papa's feet hit the floor, ours followed instantly. Long before Mama had breakfast ready, we had hunted the work mules out of the pasture and fed them, milked the cows, and split up a huge pile of stove wood.

That's the way farm children felt about a fishing trip back when I was a rusty-footed kid. Then, a fishing trip wasn't the casual Saturday afternoon sport that paved highways and fast automobiles have made it today—a thing that may easily be repeated next Saturday.

In those days, it was an event comparable to Christmas. It seldom occurred more than once a year; we planned it months ahead, reveled in it every moment it lasted, and then afterward relived it time and again in thought and conversation.

Before we could hurry through our breakfast, Charlie had arrived. Charlie was a coon hunting bachelor neighbor of ours who led the ideal life; he worked only when he took a notion and then not very hard.

He came with a flour sack of clothes slung over one shoulder, a .22 rifle in his hands, and a couple of hound dogs trailing him. We never understood how he could always tell when a fishing trip was in the making, but we never questioned his right to go along. We couldn't imagine a fishing trip without him.

Charlie came now and helped me load the wagon while Papa hooked up the mules. First, we put in the fishing tackle —trotlines, staging hooks and sinkers, minnow buckets, seine, pole lines and cane poles. I saw to that.

I still hadn't forgotten a former trip when I was so concerned with loading sections of a raft I'd invented that I forgot all about the lines until we got to the river where, besides not having the lines, my raft sank the moment I put it into the water.

We loaded corn and fodder for the mules, bed quilts, boxes of food, the frying skillet, and even a couple of early watermelons that we hoped were ripe.

Charlie grumbled a little at the amount of plunder we were taking along. All a man needed on a fishing trip, Charlie contended, was his gun, his tackle, and a side of bacon for frying-grease. But Charlie's grumbling was the sort that not even a kid would pay any mind to.

Finally, Papa said, "Well, it looks like we're off," and he and Charlie climbed up and sat in the spring seat. The rest of us clambered eagerly aboard, finding seats where we could.

The endgate was out, and the five girls argued about who was to sit with bare feet dangling off the edge of the wagon. I let them have this favorite place.

The farm wagon had no springs, and I'd learned that the constant pounding of the floorboards against my bony seat would soon drive me to hunt a softer place. I made a nest among the bed quilts and when Charles, the baby, came rushing out at the very last minute, carrying three sealed lard cans to be used as floats, I pulled him up beside me.

Papa drove past the front of the house, where Mama stood waving us goodbye. It was always with a feeling of keen regret that we left Mama at home. But she would never go with us.

On a dark, rainy night years before,

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The Llano

Somewhere at the end of those long, weedy cotton rows was the river—and the day that our work-worn old hoes would change like magic into knotty cane. It was a great day when Papa took down his fishing pole!

her father, too deaf to hear the roar of flood waters, had driven his mail hack off into the Llano River and been swept away and drowned. After that, the river was a fearful, treacherous place to Mama.

Yet, if she feared to let us children go, Mama never said so. She knew that Papa had promised us the trip and that we'd earned it. And, with the callousness of youth, we forgot her almost before the wagon had rumbled across the first ridge.

AS ALWAYS on the day we went fishing, the morning air felt fresher and cooler. The grass was greener, the wild flowers were brighter, and the birds sang sweeter. That was because we'd been in the fields so long —ever since school had turned out six weeks ago and we'd put down our books to pick up our hoes.

Then, fresh from school's confinement, we'd attacked the cotton-chopping and weed-cutting with a vigor that had made the fields look small. In no time, we felt, we could wade right through the work.

But as one long day's work followed another, as the sun grew hotter and the weeds taller, the fields seemed to grow, too, until finally the whole world was just one weedy cotton row after another, and all of life was a monotonous succession of wearisome work-filled days.

What kept us working then was anticipation. If we could stick it out until we got the crops in shape, then we could go fishing. Papa had given his promise. And now we were headed for the river!

Even the mules sensed the difference. They weren't listlessly plodding along as they did pulling the cultivator in the fields. They were stepping right out, and you could tell by the way they switched the tips of their long ears that they were just as keenly alert to the change as any of us children.

"Now, you younguns keep a sharp lookout for jackrabbits and wasp nests," Charlie said to us. "Can't tell—the miners might be skeerce in that river this time of year, and we sure want plenty of fish bait."

So as we rode along, we kept a watch on the prickly-pear flats for jackrabbits and searched each mesquite tree in hopes of finding a wasp nest.

Up in the wagon seat, Papa and Charlie started telling fishing tales. Charlie told the first one—about the time Papa caught a big bluecat on a cane pole and the fish ran between his knees before he could turn it and got away and left the hook hanging in the calf of Papa's leg.

They got a good laugh out of that one, and then Papa told about the time Charlie'd jumped off a ledge to get his bait bucket and landed almost on top of a cotton-mouth moccasin feeding on the minnows. Charlie had had to dole out minnows one at a time to the moccasin to keep him in a pleasant frame of mind till Papa could bring a club.

They told more such tales and I sat and listened and hoped that maybe on this trip something like that would happen to me so that I'd have me a tale to tell.

Then Jennie sang out, "Yonder's a jackrabbit!"

Everybody looked, and sure enough, there was one, hopping lazily along be-

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Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Volume 1. DODGE CITY, KANSAS, JULY 5, 1884. Number 44

COWBOY NEWSPAPER

By Mary Einsel

IF MATT DILLON, on the TV program, "Gun Smoke," wanted to look authentic he might be pictured sitting in a chair with his feet propped up reading a copy of *The Kansas Cowboy*.

This old newspaper thrived in Dodge City at the same time that the trail herds were pouring into the town from the south. It was a newspaper devoted completely to cattlemen and their interests. It listed herds which had arrived in Dodge, as reported by inspectors Rhodes and Taylor (117,489 from May 26-June 23 minus eighty-one strays which were cut out), and advertised "Wines! Liquors! and Cigars! All orders from the country promptly filled!"

Circulation was 400 copies a week and in the June, 1884 issue an editorial announced: "We are printed exclusively for the livestock industry. We will have nothing to do with politics, or with social, moral or religious topics."

Colonel S. S. Prouty, manager of the paper, reported such news as: "Dodge City is today the best place to purchase horses in the western states. There are upwards of 3,000 head now on the market. They can be bought cheaper here than in Texas where they were raised. The prices range from $15 to $75."

But a few items not pertaining to cattle were also used: "Two nieces of President Cleveland are teaching in the public schools of Peoria, Ill." And, "A young boy was bitten by a rattlesnake forty miles southeast of Dodge last week. Newly killed chickens were applied to the wound and were taken off green, covered with poison. Plasters of egg the entire length of the leg drew poison to the surface and were covered with the same green tinge, each application being less so than the preceding one until there seemed to be no more poison in the limb."

The *Cowboy* was started in Sidney, Kansas, but Colonel Prouty soon moved his office to Dodge City because "it is the hub for a large proportion of livestock activity."

A subscription for $2 kept the cowman up on prices and gossip in general about his business. "Cal Suggs of the Indian Territory has sold to M. L. Allstot of Lawrence, Kansas, 1,000 yearling heifers at $16 a head." Or, "The Boyces sold 200 horses last week in small lots to different parties."

Notices of Indian trouble still made the front page too: "The discontented minorities of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians are giving renewed evidence of their intense meanness just east of Dodge. They burned two or three wagon outfits last week for the fence-builders."

Dry cows around Medicine Lodge (Kansas), according to Colonel Prouty, were said to be bringing $28. Cows with calves sold for $35 to $38 and yearlings were worth $20.

The September 1 paper reflected the times in a single sentence: "Beef cattle are beginning to pour into Dodge by the thousands."

TRADE MARK APPLIED FOR

OLD WEST

Old feature, new title! Don't get upset at the new name, OLD WEST. We haven't scrapped WILD OLD DAYS, just given it a fancy name that we thought was more appropriate for this feature.

The last copy on record of *The Kansas Cowboy* gave no indication that the paper was to stop. In fact, one ad in the last paper read: "Subscribe To *The Kansas Cowboy*—Now Don't You Forget."

Thanks to the efforts of Joseph Snell, working in the newspaper section of the Kansas State Historical Building at Topeka, the reason for the paper's sudden end was found. Snell found some items from the Kinsley, Kansas, *Mercury* that pretty well established the cause of the *Cowboy's* demise.

"The *Cowboy* offices were destroyed by fire last Monday night. To Colonel Prouty of the *Cowboy* we extend sympathy. This is the second time within a year that the *Cowboy* has been burned out of house and home."

The second clipping read: "We regret to learn that the recent burn out of *The Kansas Cowboy* office will cause the permanent suspension of the paper. We had hoped that notwithstanding Colonel Prouty's ill luck in having had his office burned twice in such a short time, he would again refit his office and continue the publication of the *Cowboy*, as it has been among the best of our current newspapers."

Copies of the old paper have been preserved on microfilm and may be read at the Kansas Historical Building at Topeka.

DRILLING CONTEST

By John Hoffman

IN THE old mining camps the Fourth of July was an event and later on, Labor Day, too. There was a parade, if possible, races, and in Aurora, an old redheaded Irishman, Flannery by name, drunker than a goat, would recite the Declaration of Independence word for word. But the one paramount attraction was the drilling match.

Underground hard-rock mining until the invention of machine work motivated by compressors has always been done by hand drilling and in many isolated regions still is.

If two men were working together, one man did the striking with a seven or eight-pound hammer while the other turned the drill or "twisted" it, as we used to say, spelling each other and taking turns with the striking. It was the prettiest work there was and a good double hand hammersman was something to watch.

In later years there was much single hand work; in other words, you worked alone using a three and a half- or four-pound hammer. Generally three men worked in the bottom of the shaft, sometimes doubling up to finish a round of holes.

In a drift or cross-cut (a one-man tunnel) when "taking down roof," overhead work, you turned your drill with one hand and swung your hammer at arms' length bringing it up at head level to contact the head of the drill with your other hand. All this work required skill, bodily strength and "know how" and couldn't be learned in a day.

It has been said that the Cornish miners (Cousin Jacks) who had worked from time immemorial in the tin mines of Cornwall, in some instances running miles under the sea, have never been or will be excelled as double hand hammersmen.

To prepare for a drilling match the first thing to do is to find a suitable piece of rock to drill on. Get your rabbit before you start to cook the stew! This rock must be all of the same composition, with no hard or soft spots, no seams, fissures or cracks. Gunnison granite has always been the standard rock. I have no means of knowing how much of this rock came from Colorado for a granite formation predominates in many regions and is abundant in Virginia City.

Several teams of two men each may compete one team at a time. Three teams would be a good "set up" and it would not be strange to find some of these men practicing several days before a match.

The rock should be not less than three feet square and three feet thick, set well off the ground, with a platform built around it and a flight of steps leading up to the platform.

The drills used were seven-eighths octagonal and, of course, of different lengths generally beginning with a starter a foot long. As the hole gets deeper a longer drill is required.

The head of the drill is about an inch in diameter which is all the man striking has to center on. If he misses the drill he can easily smash his partner's hands all to pieces, for his partner is on his knees twisting the drill with both hands, and the hammersman who is a powerful husky man is raising that hammer high and coming down with all the strength he has in his body.

The drills are sharpened with a chisel bit and must be tempered so they will not check or break. Many times a drill, tempered a little too hard, has broken off in the bottom of the hole. The only way to get rid of it is to cut it out by pounding it to pieces with the drills to follow. Such an accident is bound to set the team back and in all probability lose the contest.

NOW COMES the most important feature of the event, the changing of the drills. There is an accumulation of powdered rock in the bottom of the hole through which a drill cannot cut. There is no time to spoon it out, so a man on his knees is close by playing a small stream of water into the hole and, as the drill turns, it churns up a mixture of thin mud which makes its escape from the top of the hole.

The drills are laid out in order relative to length. The men, working in unison, are stripped to the waist, the sweat running into their eyes. Now it's time to change a drill and the man on his knees reaches with his left hand for the next one. As he picks it up, he pulls out the drill in the hole with his right hand and throws it out of the way. The drill in his left hand he socks into the hole; it requires perfect timing for all this must take place in one combined movement so that the hammersman will not miss a stroke. If he does, the team is a split second behind.

It is a well-nigh inconceivable sleight-of-hand movement. When the man who is striking gets out of breath he lets go of his hammer and changes places with his partner who is on his knees turning the drill. Fifteen minutes is contest time and then the holes are measured and the deepest hole gets the big money.

One time in the town of Lucius Beebe and *The Territorial Enterprise* I saw a driller about to change and as he let go of his sweaty hammer handle it sailed into the crowd and knocked a man out. That happened the same day a team drilled through the rock. A powerful half-breed blacksmith graduate of the Carson Indian School, and Tom Moyle's boy from Bodie (also a half-breed), were the drilling team.

Billy Waters of Tonopah was World's Champion single hand driller until Curley Dan Parham gave him an awful beating. Some years later Dan ran across Billy on the street in San Francisco. Billy was distributing religious tracts.

On July 4, 1912 a match was held in Tonopah in front of the Mizpah Hotel. It was a nice day but the sun was hot and the crowd was tremendous. The gamblers and sporting fraternity wore straw hats (sailors). Most were in shirt sleeves with fancy elastic sleeve holders, and the ladies sported multi-colored parasols.

Two hard rock miners Page and Pickins won the double hand World Championship first money. Someone said it was $1,000.

Teams were generally pretty evenly matched. Barring an accident it would be hard to tell which team might win, but most everybody had a favorite to bet on. When the drilling was finished there was a run for the nearest bar, and everyone got comfortably drunk long before sundown.

John P. Lower's first gun shop on the north side of Blake Street between 15th and 16th Streets in Denver in 1876. Lower is standing in the doorway wearing a vest. Note Gatling gun. Below, Lower with a Sharps-Borchardt rifle after a demonstration of his marksmanship.

Photos Courtesy State Historical Society of Colorado

"Old John" Lower, Gunsmith

By Art Chipman

IN THE 1870s, Denver was a hustling, bustling town filled with miners, ranchers, Indians and adventurers of all types, along with a special breed of hardy businessmen. Many of these businessmen were pretty "hard cases," themselves, having made their stake in gambling, mining or, in some instances, less honorable professions. Among the most respected was an erstwhile Philadelphia salesman who was certainly a credit to the town and his trade, John P. Lower, gunsmith.

To Lower's gun shop, at 821 Blake Street, came the miners in search of a protective weapon, the badmen for their various purposes, the sportsmen and the Indians. "Old Lower's" gun shop was a gathering place for them all, a place to admire the beautifully trim Colt's pistols, the sturdy "Old Reliable" Sharps rifles, and a place to talk guns and shooting.

Born in Philadelphia in 1833, Old Lower went to work for Joseph C. Grubb & Sons, firearms merchants, at the age of eighteen. By 1858 he was an expert gunsmith and was promoted to traveling firearms representative for the whole South. Lower often told of how he left Harper's Ferry just two days before the fanatical raid of John Brown and that he was in Washington when they hanged him.

Following the Civil War, Lower began covering the western areas where there was a greater sales potential for weapons. In 1868 he visited boom-town Denver, founded only nine years before, where the rich mines were already attracting thousands of newcomers.

Lower became a close friend of Carlos

Gove, a gunsmith and Denver pioneer of 1862. Eventually, Gove persuaded Lower to leave his job with Grubb, and in 1872 they became partners. The partnership was very successful as Lower was gregarious and popular and both were active sportsmen. The business expanded and they bought out the Freund Brothers, one of their major competitors.

Then for some reason, not now known, the partnership was severed in 1876, with Lower opening his own shop at 821 Blake Street. It is suspected that it might have been due to Gove's temperament.

In any event, Lower's shop was immediately successful as he had made many friends in his few years in Denver, including the Ute Chiefs, Ouray and Colorow. These Indians and their tribesmen more or less made Lower's shop their headquarters in Denver and many a night found a half dozen or more Ute Indians sleeping on the floor among thousands of dollars worth of weapons so near and dear to any Indian's heart. Lower claimed he never lost so much as a cartridge from Indian pilfering.

John Lower was also a close personal friend of many firearms manufacturers, including the renowned Colonel Samuel Colt and Christian Sharps. Jim Bridger and Buffalo Bill Cody were also numbered among his friends; in fact, Cody was probably responsible for the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia's being outfitted by Lower for his famous buffalo hunt.

Active until a year before his death in 1917, Lower lived to be eighty-four. A gunsmith for more than sixty-five years, he spent forty-four years in Denver. From the brass-trimmed Gatling gun in front of his shop to the magnificent Schuetzen rifles in the interior, Old John Lower's gun shop was a mighty powerful attraction for men in the days when nothing bolstered a man's confidence in his future more than a trusty .44 nearby.

The Quality of Courage

(Continued from page 5)

when the danger is greatest, and that a smiling fighter is very dangerous. A little thought will show that he who smiles is relaxed, relaxed like an athlete when he knows in advance that his delivery will be right on the mark.

Of all the great Texas Rangers L. H. McNelly had this quality of fearlessness to a greater degree than any other. To him a gun battle was like a chess game, something to win first with the mind and then with the body. Many others had the same quality.

It must never be thought that these men were foolhardy. They were too intelligent for that. In the gunfighting of the West the foolhardy did not survive long enough to make a reputation. I do not want to leave the impression, either, that because the men I am talking about were relaxed that they were not alert. They were prepared to act quickly, but they were hot strung up until their muscles were tight and out of control.

I have not seen this theory of courage set forth in print, though it may have been. I have discussed it with Texas Rangers and other officials who are frequently in danger, and some of them agree that the theory is sound. I am submitting it to the readers of TRUE WEST to see what light they can throw on the question as to whether courage is a positive or a negative thing.—Dr. W. P. Webb, March-April, 1955, TRUE WEST, Volume 2, No. 4.

Virginia City's Strange Chinese Trial

(Continued from page 31)

that enough was enough. A posse was organized and dispatched to the scene of battle. A band of forty chattering, belligerent Chinese were placed under arrest and housed in the Virginia City jail. An investigation followed the arrests and, as a result, two members of the Four Company group, Ah Wah and Ah Yen, were charged with murder. A preliminary hearing was held.

The hearing opened with a mob of Chinese witnesses. As the small courtroom could accommodate but a few of them, they squatted outside under the guardianship of a deputy sheriff until called to the stand. Each was requested to swear upon the Bible to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, after which they delivered a mess of gibberish.

They talked all right—they talked about everything except the subject at hand in a combination Chinese and pidgin English! Questions put to them were politely and definitely evaded, and the prosecution got nowhere fast. After a day and a half of this it was suggested that two Chinese interpreters be brought in from San Francisco.

The interpreters arrived tired and dusty several weeks later.

"What's the trouble?" they inquired of the judge.

"These dang heathen won't tell the truth even on the witness stand," declared the exasperated magistrate.

"Chinese people are very honest. Have they taken the oath to tell the truth?" inquired one of the interpreters.

"They swear on the Bible to tell the truth and then carry on in a language nobody can understand."

The interpreter excused the judge's ignorance with a condescending smile. "They know nothing about the white man's Bible," he said. "You must obtain a freshly-killed white rooster, then ask each witness to dip his fingers in the blood, after which you will get the truth."

The judge agreed to this procedure but soon discovered a drawback to it. There were 100 witnesses and not enough of the special birds to go around. The sheriff sent his deputies out to round up poultry and, before the hearing started, the jailyard was filled with crates of white roosters. As each witness was sworn in, he would be led out into the yard, the head of a white rooster chopped off, and in the blood of the freshly-killed fowl he would be sworn to tell the truth. As the trial proceeded, the jailyard took on the appearance of a slaughterhouse, and many of the sheriff's political aides had their fill of chicken pie.

AT THE END of the hearing, the magistrate bound Ah Wah and Ah Yen over to the grand jury. The grand jury indicted them for murder, and shortly afterwards, they were tried in the district court. The accused murderers were defended by Col. Wilbur F. Sanders, Judge Henry M. Blade, and Col. J. E. Callaway. At the trial the rooster oath, having served its purpose, was dispensed with, much to the chagrin of the chicken fanciers.

During the trial, Michael Hatfield became ill and was excused from jury duty. Although two of the defendant's counselors protested against it, the presiding judge decided to proceed with the trial with the remaining eleven jurors. Ah Wen and Ah Yen were declared guilty and given the death sentence.

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court on the contention that the conviction of a capital offense by a jury of but eleven persons was unconstitutional. The contention was upheld and a new trial was ordered. Ah Wah and Ah Yen were returned to the county jail.

Nearly a year later the case came up for trial again. In the meantime an election had been held in Virginia City. Those of the sheriff's constituents who had not been given an opportunity to enjoy chicken pie at the expense of Madison County voted against him and he was defeated. When the case was called, a new prosecuting attorney was in office and a new district judge was on the bench. The two prisoners were brought into court by the sheriff.

"Are you ready to proceed with the trial of Ah Wah and Ah Yen?" the judge questioned the prosecuting attorney. "I am, Your Honor," was the reply. One of the attorneys for the defense then arose and interposed an objection.

"Your Honor," he said, "this is a trial for murder. If the defendants are adjudged guilty, they may suffer the extreme penalty of the law. The rule of law is that when a man is on trial for his life he must be present. Otherwise the proceeding will not stand."

"Are these persons not the defendants, Ah Wah and Ah Yen, who are charged with murder?" asked the astonished judge.

"They are not our clients," stated the several attorneys for the defense.

The prosecuting attorney, who had not been present at the first trial, admitted that he did not know.

The sheriff was called into the courtroom. When questioned, he admitted that he did not know positively whether the prisoners were the defendants, Ah Wah and Ah Yen.

"Your Honor," he defended himself, "all Chinamen look alike to me. If these men are not the defendants, I do not know who they are."

Counsel for the defense sat back with relaxed smiles. Chinese interpreters were called before the court as well as the head men of all the six companies and all affirmed that the prisoners were not the men accused of murder. The prisoners were released.

Afterward the true facts of the mystery of the mixed up defendants came out. The quarreling companies had decided to adjust their differences and save the lives of the men in the jail, so they simply used Eastern guile and natural attention to little details against the white man's more routine carelessness, and won their point.

While in jail the prisoners had been allowed many visitors. Two Chinese of about the same size and general appearance as the prisoners visited them in their cells. While making their visit, they changed clothes with the murderers who casually walked out of the jail before the eyes of the supposedly conscientious jailer, and escaped. Once out of jail they kept traveling, which was the most important part of the carefully executed plot. As there were no defendants to prosecute, there could, of course, be no trial.

The only real results of the court activities were that the sheriff lost his job, there was a shortage of white roosters, the county was out many hundreds of dollars, and bored housewives had a recreation break—plus the fact that Chinese placer miners had to work harder than ever to make up for lost time at their diggings.

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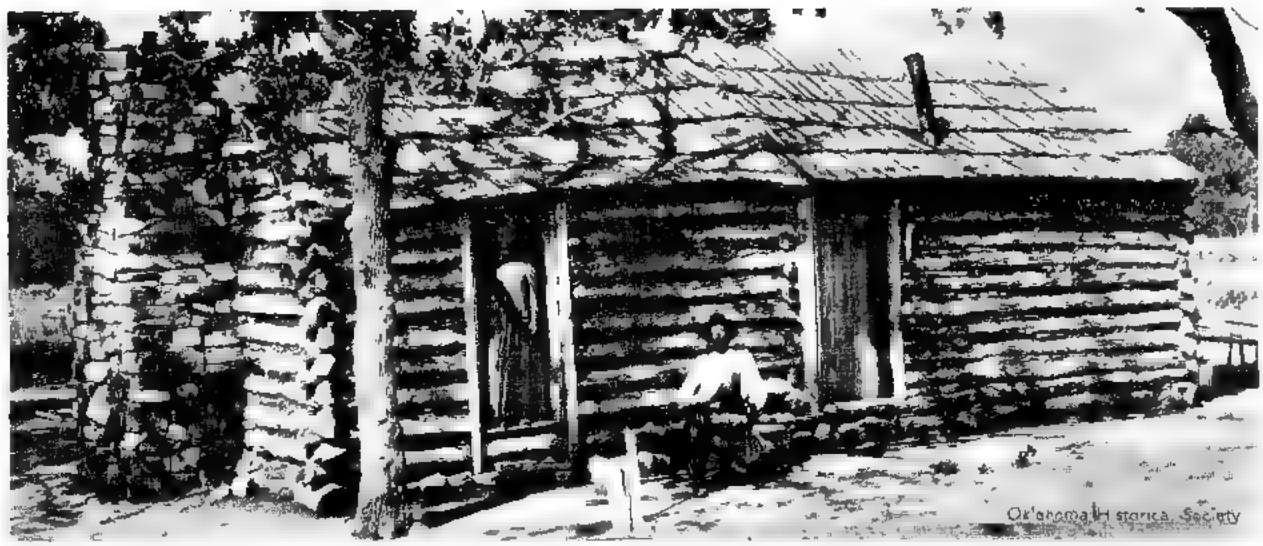

Early homesteader cabin

Making a New Start

By MARY E. LAWRENCE

None of us but Father wanted to go—Mother least of all. The West welcomed some folks, but it didn't want us . . .

WHEN I was a child of four, my folks moved to Iowa. My parents and seven of us children lived for a time in a schoolhouse, before we moved onto an eighty-acre farm which they purchased. The house stood on blocks, which made a good place for little girls to play.

Mother and we children would dig up small trees in the woods, carry them home, and plant them in our yard. Of these we were very proud.

When I was ten years old father decided to move "out West" where a homestead, pre-emption, and free claim could be taken. A neighbor, Mr. Mance, had been out in western Nebraska looking around, and told what a good country it was—cattle could graze the year 'round. Our little farm, not yet entirely paid for, was sold. When debts were straightened up, there was about $800 left.

Well, the day came to start west with two covered wagons, thirty head of cattle and our few horses. Mr. Mance owned one of the wagons. Mother begged to remain, and we kids clung to treasured articles which could not be taken along. Tears were shed as we loaded up knowing that we would never again see the trees we had so laboriously started growing in the yard.

That was March, 1884. I was to help with the driving so Mr. Mance could help trail the stock. When we got out into new scenes, the children became contented in the novel experience of traveling. Nice days we got along pretty well, but when cold drizzles came it was much more tedious, with roads cut deep, cattle miring down and all that. We might have stayed in some of the mudholes for days had not others come along and given us a lift. At times we could see dozens of schooners wending westward. At the end of a long day's travel we were glad to lie down on our hard beds and go to sleep.

Traveling along the Missouri Valley we were charmed with the flocks of ducks, geese and cranes winging their way north. In time we came to sandy country which extended for some thirty miles, as tiring on the teams as mud. Settlement and watering places were very scarce. We carried a limited amount of corn for the horses, for it was difficult to buy feed. We had along a fifteen-gallon water keg, but the contents had to be conserved mostly for cooking and drinking, with little to be spared for washing.

During a cold rain we did come across a settler who let us stop to rest our stock and enjoy the comfort of a fire. At this place four of the children were ill with colds and sore throats. It later developed that they were afflicted with the dread disease, diphtheria. Mother was panic stricken—medical aid was difficult to secure, money was getting short, and Father thought we should push on toward our destination. We hoped to find a Mr. Dunn who had settled in the country ahead of us.

Finally we reached his place which was on the opposite side of a beautiful small river. Father talked with him across the stream. He invited us to come and rest a few days. The water was high and father thought we dare not risk the crossing, so just the two men went over horseback to talk with Mr. Dunn. He advised that we go twenty miles up the valley where there was good grass and water, with no close neighbors to "bother" us.

AFTER two tedious days we reached the location, unloaded the wagons, and turned the stock loose to graze. We were told this was sixty miles from Ainsworth where our things had been shipped. Covers from the two wagons were stretched over a hole dug in the hillside.

The two men left for Ainsworth with the wagons to get the goods we had forwarded there. We girls were to watch the cattle and a couple of colts, which we brought along. The tired, weak cattle gave us no trouble, but the colts disappeared.

After a long tedious wait, the men returned saying they had decided to locate closer to the railroad, but they had brought along the goods from Ainsworth. Father and Mr. Mance were determined to trace down the colts so that made another long delay. On the evening of the fourth day we saw the men returning through the gap in the hills with the runaway colts.

Abby had been quite sick, flushed with fever. However, next morning we were loaded up and headed toward Ainsworth. We had to leave many things cluttered there on the lonely prairie by our dug out. Wooden barrels bristling with hoes, rakes, branding irons, a plow, table, some benches, a few chairs, a couple of wooden beds, a stove, stone jars, a wood tub, and some boxes would have to wait there for the time being. The cattle too were left in the valley until we became better located.

We had gone perhaps three miles when Abby grew suddenly worse and died. Near her lay Willie, burning with fever. Father said we must hurry on, and at sundown we stopped on a little knoll near a creek where a grave was dug. Abby's body was lowered, wrapped in a blanket. Some rough boards were laid in on a ledge to keep the dirt shoveled in from going directly on her corpse.

When her grave was mounded up, a stick was driven at one end. On a small board her name, age, and date of death were written with a lead pencil, and the board nailed to a stake. We drove farther that night to make overnight camp. As we left little Abby behind, Mother uttered these words, "She didn't want to come."

The next day Martha, five years older than I, whispered to me that Mother had a new baby in the other wagon. I ran over there and, sure enough, lying in Mother's arms was a dark-haired bit of humanity. "Where did you find it, Mother?"

"God gave her to us in place of Abby," she replied.

I was feeling very ill by now, and wondered if I, too, must die. I wanted to lie by Mother but there was no room with two sick children lying by her already, in addition to the new arrival. I

(Continued on page 54)

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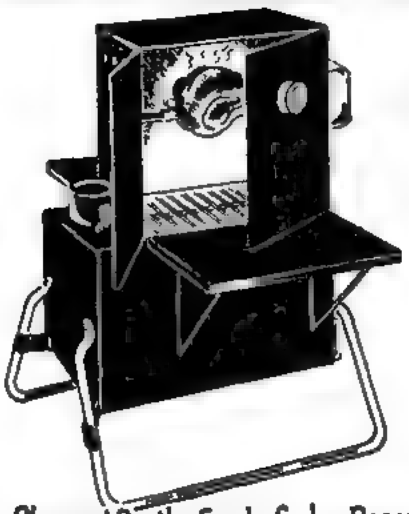

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The Battle of Tahlequah Canyon

(Continued from page 19)

of sight. Bruner sent a scout to determine if he were in the robber's cave near Wilburton. He wasn't. Nor was he, or any of his gang, in any of the dozen or more hideouts Bruner had learned he used from time to time.

Bruner sent scouts everywhere and began his plans for what was to be the final battle. He wired Heck Thomas, asking him to come along when and if he found Christie's latest hiding place. Thomas did better than answer the telegram; he came himself. At last, one of Bruner's scouts came back with word that Christie was holed up at an old trading post in a canyon near Tahlequah.

Bruner was familiar with the old trading post and its location—and both bothered him. The post had been constructed on the order of a fort. Originally consisting of three buildings inside a stockade, only the trading store itself was left, but that was the strongest of all. Made of hardwood logs cleverly cut and chiseled to fit without mortar, the building was waterproof and fireproof. The roof was of logs covered by sod which was kept well watered against fire-arrows. The windows were barred and equipped with heavy shutters pierced with gunslots to be used in fighting off attack from any quarter. Its situation at the end of the canyon and almost over a small spring made rear attack impossible, and it was too far out in the open for an overhead attack.

Through Marshal Yoes, Bruner and Thomas arranged with the Army to bring in a three-pound cannon and thirty rounds of ammunition from Kansas. They made a formidable entourage as they crossed the Arkansas on ferries then headed north and slightly west. In addition to eighteen deputies and possemen, there were six wagons (with the cannon bringing up the rear), spare horses for wagons and riders, and several of the inevitable curious who had to be ordered back to town lest they give away the lawmen too soon.

IF CHRISTIE knew they were coming —which he probably did—he made no effort to escape. No one knows why he did not break away while he could. Of his gang he had only a young boy and two squaws, the rest being absent on some errand. It might be that he expected the rest of his men to return in time to make things interesting for the deputies by catching them between two fires. Perhaps he felt himself safer behind the log walls of the post. Whatever the reason, he was still in the building when Thomas challenged him to come out and surrender. The answer was just what he expected—a volley that drove them back to cover.

Captain George White and his crew speedily uncoupled the heavy, awkward gun, wheeled it into place, loaded, aimed and fired. White had been an artillery officer for the Confederate forces and, like many of the others, confidently expected the gun to batter a hole in the walls, which were old and weatherbeaten. But when the smoke cleared and the dust settled somewhat, the old fort showed no signs that it was under attack.

White ordered the gun loaded and fired again. Same result. The gun was wheeled closer, swabbed, loaded and aimed. Two more shells did no appreciable damage. Some parts of the sod roof were shaken down but there was no impression on the stout old walls except where the balls had struck and bounced off. Again the gun was wheeled closer.

There had been no reply from the fort during these preliminaries but now the hidden guns opened up and the gun crew had to jump for cover. A sort of stalemate ensued. The gun was useless without a crew to man it and Christie was able to keep them pinned down. At last, White and his men dragged the gun back out of rifle range and opened up again with a dangerously heavy charge. Same result—some of the sod roof was shaken down, dust was beaten out of the logs, and there was a distinct impression of the ball between two of the hardwood logs, but the ball itself lay harmlessly among the others before the post.

After that, the cannon was useful as a diversion only and White kept his crew loading and firing as long as the ammunition lasted. As the last ball thudded harmlessly to the ground, the only effect was that one wall had been moved several inches inward but without breaking or coming loose entirely, and more of the sod roof had tumbled down, exposing the log rafters.

Stationed around the canyon in whatever cover they could find, the riflemen were as frustrated as White, and the reason was simple. Christie had only to wait until a deputy showed himself briefly, and then fire in complete safety from the protection of the fort. The deputies had early guessed that the majority of the band were off on some business, and they had to keep watch on all sides to avoid being trapped between Christie and his returning men.

For two long days, from the first of November to the morning of the third, the battle kept up. The toll among Bruner's men was heavy, with more than half of them wearing bandages of some kind on head, leg, arm or shoulder. There were also four blanket-covered forms in one of the wagons waiting transportation back to town for burial.

At last, uneasy over the probability that Christie's men might arrive at any moment, and concerned over the lawmen's increasing losses, the deputies took a step none of them, knowing how Parker felt about dead prisoners, wanted to take.

While the remaining force created a diversion on one side of the fort to attract Christie to that side, Paden Tolbert and one of the only unwounded deputies left, took a keg of gunpowder, a short fuse and wadding, and made their way around to what they hoped was the unprotected side. It was defended but they were able to get the keg in place and light the fuse, despite the bullets that flew around them. They just had time to get to the partial protection of some rocks before the powder went up.

All of one wall and a portion of the rear went up in splinters, while the other two walls caved outward under the force of the explosion. Dust and smoke hung in a thick pall over the erstwhile impenetrable fortress. Just as it began to lift, the deputies moved in, none of them knowing quite what to expect.

Someone pointed to a form that staggered toward them through the uneasy light. Thinking it was one of the two who had set off the charge, no one gave the figure a second thought until Bruner yelled a warning. He had recognized, from having trailed him almost six years, the man who staggered and reeled over the remains of the shattered building toward them.

Christie began firing toward the sound

(Continued on page 46)

General O. O. Howard and Snake River Indian Chief Washakie.

A Scout for General Howard

The Paiutes and Bannocks—men, women and children—joined forces to burn out the countryside. Sometimes the "minor" wars are the bloodiest of all . . .

By O. P. CRESAP
As told to Thomas Morgan

Author's Note: O. P. Cresap, one of the earliest pioneers of Grant County, Oregon, served as guide to General Howard's army during the Bannock and Paiute War of 1878 and in that capacity witnessed much of this campaign in Grant and Umatilla Counties. His account gives an accurate picture of Indian troubles in the Northwest.

JOURNEYS over the old stage lines were fraught with great danger. Many brutal murders were committed by the Indians, but it sometimes happened that they were badly worsted in encounters with brave stage drivers and fearless passengers. The pioneers of Jordan Valley still tell both laughable and heart-rending stories of the troubles that beset the stages in the early days.

In one instance, the Silver City stage, Nathan Dixon driving, was surrounded by a howling band of Snake Indians near Summit Springs. In the stage were fifteen men and one woman. All the men had small arms and several had repeating rifles. One man had a brace of bulldogs. The savage yells of the Indians struck terror to every man's heart. They fled from the stage and undertook to hide in the sagebrush.

The stage driver at once opened fire on the savages. The woman passenger seized a rifle from a frightened male companion, called the bulldogs and jumped from the stage. The dogs obeyed her orders and went after the Indians tooth and toenail. She rested the rifle on a wheel of the stage and began firing. One redskin was killed and another wounded. In the meantime the driver had dropped down among his horses and was doing good execution with his revolvers.

In ten minutes the dogs, the woman and the driver had routed the Indians and sent them out of range. The faint hearts hurriedly gathered in from the sagebrush retreats and the balance of the way was pursued in peace and, by the male contingent, in silence. They doubtless reflected that there were more Molly Pitchers than one in the world. Possibly they even changed their minds on the women's right question. It is said that when the hotel at Silver City was reached they registered under assumed names.

TOM MEYERS and I left Elk Creek on the morning of July 2, 1878, bound for Canyon City. We had no particular object in view except to visit the city and did not know there was an Indian war in progress. We arrived at the old Dribblesby Ranch, now known as the Smith Ranch, about noon, intending to stop there for dinner. I went up and knocked at the door but could get no answer, so went back of the house to see where the family had gone. I could find no one and going into the house discovered that things there were undisturbed. I concluded that the occupants were away in the hills.

We fed our horses and secured a cold lunch for ourselves, then rode on. At the next ranch I found no one at home; likewise at the next. I then became suspicious and the more so because I saw a man scouting near us. When he rode up he told us that the Bannocks and Paiutes were on the warpath and that he was one of General Howard's scouts. As he was going to Canyon City, we rode along with him and learned more of the trouble. He said that Howard was south of Canyon City in pursuit of the Indians, who were crossing the range and headed toward Long Creek.

At Canyon City there was a martial stir in the air and all was excitement. Most of the men of the town were under arms and the women and children had been removed to the mining tunnels west of the town. A shipment of 100 stands of arms, together with ammunition, had just been received from The Dalles in response to an appeal from the citizens. Every able-bodied man and boy in the town was well equipped and ready to give an account of himself, should the redskins appear.

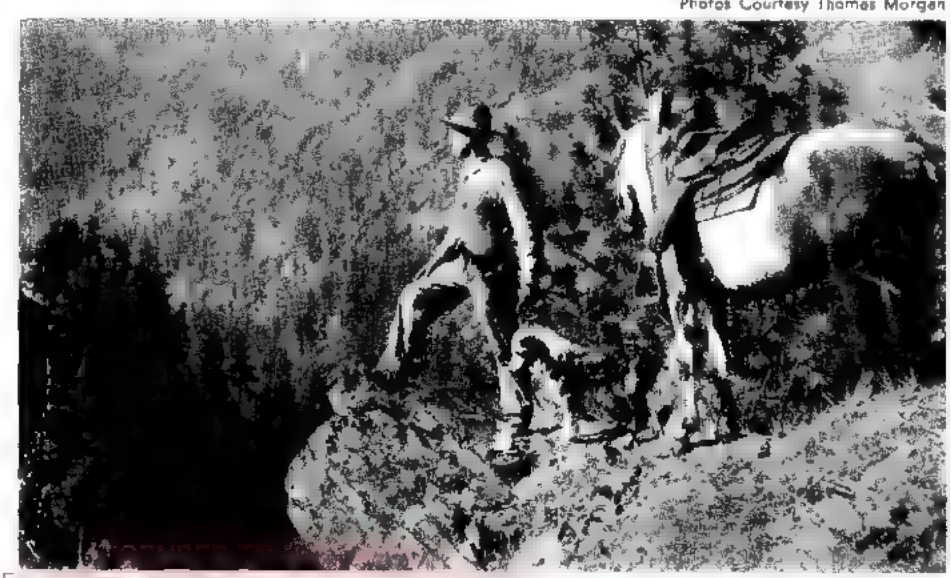
As soon as I learned enough of the particulars to convince me that the people at Elk Creek were in danger, I made preparations for an immediate return. Before midnight I was well on my way accompanied by Tom and two others who joined us. That was one of the darkest nights I have ever seen and we had to walk our horses as soon as we got to the foothills. We reached Elk Creek, or Susanville, about nine o'clock the next morning and in a short time the six or seven families there, the Blake, Bison, Meal and other families, had packed what few necessities were required and with the exception of John Blake, the merchant who offered to stay and keep watch until we could return, the party headed southward.

AFTER we were well on our way, John Austin and I left the company with the intention of reconnoitering and, if

(Continued on page 68)

Scouting in Oregon.

Photos Courtesy Thomas Morgan



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The Battle of Tahlequah Canyon

(Continued from page 44)

of that voice as he moved into clear air, and he kept on firing, seemingly impervious to the deputies' bullets. When the rifle was empty, he drew his six-gun and kept on. Not until that gun was empty and he was clear of the building, did he hesitate, go to his knees, then topple full on his face, the gun buried under him.

The trading post was only a few hundred yards from Ned's home; his father and mother were forced to listen to the gun battle all those weary three days. To them, the final explosion of the gunpowder was as the clap of doom and both knew instinctively that the end had come.

The Indian was taken to Ft. Smith in one of the wagons. There his body was photographed with his celebrated rifle in the traditional upside down position of the defeated. The father came to claim his son for burial by tribal rites, and Parker closed his books on Ned Christie.

About the only comment that Bruner or Thomas made about the harrowing experience was, "For a little guy, he sure raised a lot of hell."

Old Nevada Diggings

(Continued from page 21)

IN A LONG deep canyon just south of Candeleria, where the Diablo, Emperor and Metallic shafts were located, was the settlement of Metallic. Old-timers called it Pickhandle Gulch and the name was certainly tailored for it. Its residents were never much for the due process of law, preferring to settle disputes in their own way—with pick handles.

The first time I prowled the gulch in the early 1930s, I came to the conclusion the entire camp had been built of native stone and whiskey cases. One of the last cabins to go was built of this unique material; cases filled with dirt, re-lidded and laid like brick. Stenciled ends showed each case had contained "one dozen bottles." The side markings revealed that the contents had been "Bottled from 1874 Whiskies. Shipped from Dist. 8 Oct. 17 1879. Arrived San Francisco June 6 1880 Ex-ship Benson."

One of the well-known residents was a character called Shagnasty Joe, a loud-mouthed fourflusher who never worked as long as he could find anything else to occupy his time. He was considered harmless and spent the biggest part of his time hanging around the Roaring Gimlet Saloon in Candeleria, mooching drinks and bragging of his prowess in many fields, particularly the brothels.

Pickhandle's bad boy, a real number one bad actor, was a drifter from the Comstock country, "Blue Dick" Hartman, whose face had been permanently disfigured by powder burns. Jealousy between these two characters threatened to cause trouble most any time, since both had done considerable bragging about what would happen.

One day someone started the rumor that Blue Dick had been killed in a brawl and was laid out in McKissick's Saloon on the south side of the plaza in Candeleria. The news spread quickly through both camps and when the second shift came down from the mines, the citizens of Pickhandle gathered to pay their last respects. Odd, isn't it, how death sometimes increases popularity?

As the mourners filed into the saloon every eye was drawn to the shadowy corner where Blue Dick's body was stretched full length on a billiard table and covered by a torn, dirty canvas. Beside him, near his head lay his old slouch hat. From the table end nearest the bar a pair of worn boots stuck out grotesquely.

Carefully, one of the mourners drew back the crude shroud and peered into Dick's mean, powder-marked face. As he gazed at his fellow Gulcher, one blue-specked eyelid twitched in a sly wink. Then he understood.

"Pore old Dick," he said. "Dick was a wonderful man. A credit to the State and to Metallic. A name to be respected all over the West. The way I see it, it's up to us to lay him away in style. How about it, boys?" He looked around the room, along the bar. "Let's give him a *real* funeral, a funeral like this camp ain't never seen before." He picked up the battered old hat and strode to the bar. Coins clinked after each round of drinks as it was passed up and down the bar.

THE WAKE was getting nicely underway when the bat-wing doors were flung wide and the burly figure of Shagnasty Joe filled the opening. He lurched to the bar, elbowed room for himself and let loose a mighty roar. "What the hell's goin' on here? Can't a man git a drink?"

"Now Joe," the spokesman said, "that ain't no way to act in the presence of the dead. There's pore old Dick, dead and cold on the table there. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, raisin' hell that a way."

"*Dead*?" Shagnasty shouted. "That worthless, no-good bum? Who done it? Who beat me out of the job? He weren't no tough—just a yaller-livered coward. Give him a dirty look and he'd run an' hide, his tail between his legs. Tough? *Ha*!"

Shagnasty's remarks might have become personal, had he had time to really warm up. As it was, his opinion of his old rival ended on a note of abject terror.

The "corpse" of Blue Dick Hartman had leaped from the table, arms flapping wildly as he fought to unlimber his six-gun. Just as the panic-stricken badman made it to the door, Blue Dick cut loose. Down the street they raced, dust billowing after them—but with terror in the saddle, Joe soon outdistanced Blue Dick. Thus ended the somewhat dubious career of Shagnasty Joe so far as Pickhandle Gulch was concerned, for they never saw him again.

Candeleria has been operating sporadically for several years. Dumps have been stoped down and run through the mill, for the old boys were not keen on ore that ran less than $50.00. A new silver lode was opened up a few years ago and, so far as I know, may be still producing a little.

Just about all the old-timers—"Mouse" Murphy, "Pop" Stratton, "Wingie," "Haybag" and their generation—are gone. If silver ever makes a comeback many of the old diggings in the Montgomery country will, no doubt, open again—but the romance, the glamour, if there ever was any, will never return. Never again will men work like beasts. The cry, "Fire in the hole!" will be a forgotten sound. Modern methods, modern machinery, will do the work of the Cousin Jacks, the Bohunks, the drifters. Black powder, the back-breaking swing of the single and double-jack, will be a forgotten art.

Maybe it is just as well.

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THE STOUT OF HEART

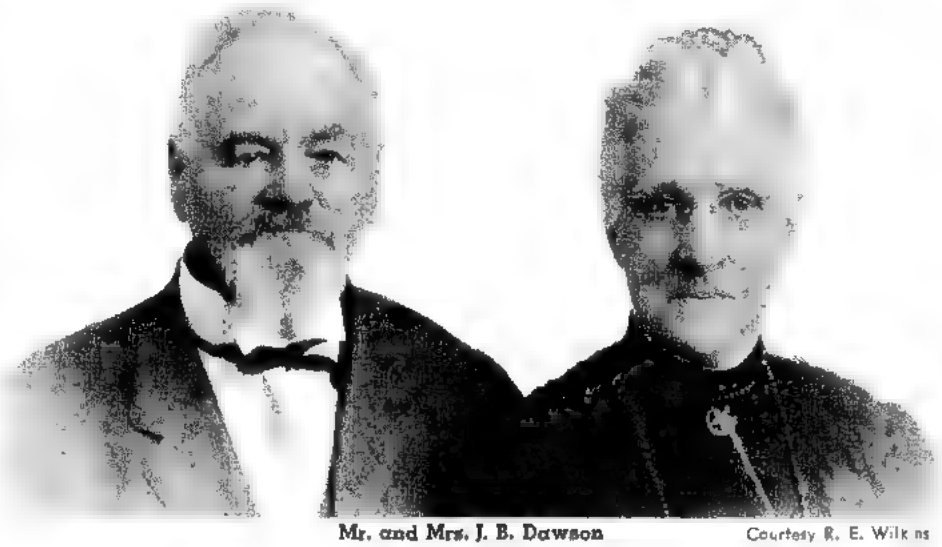
Submitted by R. E. Wilkins

Editor's Note: Many of the courageous and substantial citizens who pioneered our West have never received the credit due them. They are largely unknown to the general public. We are pleased, therefore, to reprint this incident from the life of John Barkey Dawson, a cattleman who trailed over Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah in the Sixties and Seventies. Ghost Towners who have visited Dawson, New Mexico, or Dawson, Colorado, will be interested in knowing that these settlements were named for John Dawson. The following story, written by the Hon. Hatton W. Sumners, was originally published in *Farm and Ranch Magazine*, October 14, 1911.

I WAS recently given the opportunity of visiting with Colonel Charles Goodnight, one of the great Texas pioneers, at the Colorado ranch of J. B. Dawson, his business partner of former days, and his comrade in many an adventure on the Texas plains.... When Weatherford was a border town, Charles Goodnight and J. B. Dawson, with a mere handful of others, were establishing and defending the far outposts of civilization . . . they laid out cattle trails hundreds of miles across trackless prairies, and fought the Comanches for the right of passage over them.

It was a rare pleasure to listen to these old veterans of the West as they sat together . . . recounting in the most casual way experiences which, had they happened in the life of most of us, would have sent us up and down the country parading ourselves as heroes, telling other people of our achievements at so much "per tell."

What was said by them was not for publication. It was just a journey by two men, one past seventy-six and the other eighty-two but both of vigorous mentality, back through the vanished years of the cattle trail, the campfires, and the Indian encounters—back to times and conditions when only real men could survive. It is a pity that so little of the story of the romance of the West is being preserved. Much that we should be proud of is now lost forever, sealed in the humble graves of men who, away out on the lonely prairies . . . often singlehandedly . . . matched their skill and courage against tremendous odds. Sometimes it was in their own defense, sometimes in the protection or rescue of another to whom they owed only the obligation of one man to another in distress.



Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Dawson — Courtesy R. E. Wilkins

I GIVE you, just as it was told to me, a story which is typical of those days, in which a young Comanche Indian was the hero.

Colonel Goodnight said to Mr. Dawson, "John, tell Sumners about the fight when you got that arrow wound in your hand there," pointing to the scar.

"All right, Charlie," said Mr. Dawson. "It was in 1860. At that time I was living near Ft. Belknap in what is now Young County, Texas. The Indians made a raid into our neighborhood and killed a neighbor boy, Joe Browning. John R. Bell, George Bell, Elias Hale, Tom Stogan, a man named Wright (I have forgotten the given name) and myself followed their trail, overtook them about 125 miles away, killed one of them but the other escaped.

"After the fight we got started home, and the next morning met another band of seven Indians. After running them to Paint Creek above old Camp Cooper, we overtook them and in the fight which followed killed six. Continuing our journey toward home, on the evening of the same day about an hour before sundown we met a band of six Indians driving some stolen horses. We saw them first and took cover behind a hill. As they came around it, we met them face to face. The place was known as Baylor's Creek, now in Hall County.

"When the Indians saw us they set up a yell; we yelled back and the fight began. Four of the Indians were hit. One of them was not killed but was badly wounded in the back and could not get up.

"Another Indian who had been hit, and a boy about seventeen years old, started to escape on a horse. When they had gone some distance, the boy looked back and saw the wounded Indian on the ground struggling to rise. He jumped down from the horse and came back to the one on the ground. The boy tried to lift him, but the man could not stand. When the young brave saw that he could do nothing for his friend, he gave the most distressed cry I have ever heard and started for us, shooting as he came. It was clear that he had determined to kill some of us, or die in the attempt.

"He was coming straight for me. I shot him with a rifle. Tom Stogan and Elias Hale were shooting at him with six-shooters. The boy had on a loose shirt and I could see the pistol bullets drive the shirt into his body. The bullets went true but they could not stop him. The men who were shooting at him with their pistols were kneeling down. The Indian was running erect—straight for me.

"He got so close to us that Stogan and Hale got back and I started to mount my horse. When the Indian boy saw me doing this he mounted one of our horses and met me face to face, about ten steps away. We both started to shoot at almost the same time, I with my pistol, he with his bow. He was a little quicker than I was and his arrow went into my right hand as I was aiming my pistol at him, and into the lock of my pistol, disballing it and rendering me helpless.

"Just as he was getting another arrow with which he, no doubt, would have killed me, George Baylor shot him with a shotgun and he fell from his horse. When his body was examined it was found that he had one rifle wound and nine pistol wounds, besides the one made by the shotgun. There were no marks on his arms or legs, but his shirt looked as if it had been dipped in blood.

"Others may have had a nobler purpose, may have used better judgment, or may have been inspired by a higher patriotism, but no example of human courage eclipses that of this lone Indian boy with his bow and arrow, engaged in mortal combat with six white men armed with guns. His name is not known, his body was left on the prairie, but he died a hero's death."

This incident illustrates the savagery of the times and makes us appreciate how relentless must have been the warfare between whites and Indians.

The body of the Indian who escaped on the horse was afterward found and his shield became the property of Mr. Dawson. Its buckskin covering was given to the young lady who afterward became his wife. She used it as a covering for the family Bible, the book of peace and love.

(Continued on next page)

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From the covering of a savage's shield to the covering of the Bible is a great change, but little greater than the change which has come over the times since then.

The Indians have gone from the Plains and the catttle trail has been obliterated by the plow. Instead of around a campfire, Mr. Dawson and his friends gather now in his comfortable, hospitable home. Farther and farther he has borne the standard of civilization—from west Texas into New Mexico, and from New Mexico to the beautiful valley of Bear River in northwest Colorado.

As I talked with J. B. Dawson and Charles Goodnight, I realized more fully than ever that the conception of the pioneer cattleman as a long-haired daredevil made up of spurs, sombrero, bad whiskey and six-shooters is a base slander upon the men who drove the professional badman to his grave and established law in the land. There was no appeal from the verdict of the juries who deliberated under the mesquite trees. These men could ride as hard and shoot as straight as any desperado, and they did it when occasion demanded, but they are almost as rare as the buffalo now.

The conditions which produced this type can never again exist. Hemmed in by the ever-increasing numbers which are pressing in upon them, they are making their last stand before the onward march of a more effete civilization. There is something intensely pathetic about this. A few Indians may languish on reservations; specimens of the buffalo which once roamed in majestic freedom may be preserved in parks and zoological gardens, but no skill of men can save for posterity the blend of recklessness and responsibility that characterized the true heroes of the Old West.

Crafty Killer of the Desert

(Continued from page 25)

Mr. Angell said later that the Indians began throwing away everything loose to lighten the load on their horses—canteens first, and then saddles which they kicked off the horses in full flight.

"He's down! We've got him!"

"Careful! He might not be dead!"

The Indians rode up to the body, and kept firing into it, venting their anger and desire for revenge. "Well," said Mr. Angell when they finally quit firing, "seems like we'll make less money by collecting the reward than we would by shipping him to the smelter to recover the lead."

Mouse was skin and bones, and it is said that he probably didn't weigh over eighty-five pounds when they got him. Mr. Angell pretended to be unable to lift him, however, and said, "Here, give me a hand so we can get him on a horse."

The Indians refused to come near the body, saying, "His evil spirit might pass into us if we touch him." They got sticks and tried to help lift with them, but had little success.

"Look there," said Mr. Angell. "He's still wearing Stearns' leather boots, and there's Davis' pistol and the rifle from White Hills."

The dead outlaw was finally thrown across a pack horse, and carried in to the Harris Ranch, where an inquest was held. There the possemen obtained verification of Mouse's identity and of their part in catching him, so that they could collect a reward.

"Where do you want him buried?" they asked.

"Oh, just drop him down by the road, where he can see me as I go by," remarked Harris. So they threw the body in a wagon, drove down the road to a wash near the present railroad grade, put a lariat around his feet, and pulled him out into a shallow grave.

Mouse made his last appearance in 1901 when a young fellow from the Moapa Valley collected a dollar for taking some relic hunters out to his grave where some of the bones were scattered around on the ground. So ended Mouse, the mighty killer.

Road to Mouse's Tank. He spent part of his last eighteen months hiding within a mile of here.

Courtesy the Author

Death's Quick Flirtation

By VICTOR DURDEN

When a man and a packtrain tumble down a mountainside and the man's in front of the mules . . .

ALL THAT DAY Pick Ward and I had been snowshoeing the canyons off Race Creek, trying to scare up a fresh cougar track. The hounds, excited by new bobcat signs, had led us a merry chase. There was just enough crust on the two-foot snow to support the lighter cats, while the dogs broke through to lunge and flounder in hopeless pursuit.

It took us most of the afternoon to round up two dogs and make it back to Stuart Aitken's cow camp. Stuart had finished feeding his herd, checked the new calves and the springing cows, and was back in the cabin for the night. The three of us were circled around the stove, stretching our socked feet toward its luxurious warmth. Our bellies were full of mulligan stew and, except for the dull aching in the charlie-horse area of my leg muscles, the world was quite a wonderful place and it was good to be alive.

Such conducive atmosphere brings out the raconteur in anyone. It was inevitable that stories would be told. After some desultory conversation, we got on the subject of narrow escapes and how, when death seems imminent, there flashes across a man's mind almost every detail of his life—a kind of instantaneous review of his past.

It had once happened to me. I had dived into the shallow waters of Palacios Bay on the Gulf of Mexico when the tide was out. Two of the cervical vertebrae in my neck were dislocated. The intense pain and the temporary paralysis which rendered me helpless on the oyster shell bottom convinced me that my time had come. In the brief period before my swimming companion rescued me, I had ample opportunity to witness that rare phenomenon of an entire life flashing before the mind's eye.

Stuart recalled a similar experience but, since it occurred to him during an operation in a hospital, it was decided that his account was not admissable for the record because his crisis was planned, store-boughten, and therefore could not be classified as raw adventure.

Then Pick lit a cigarette, flipped the match through a crack in the warped top of the stove, wriggled his toes meditatively and told his story.

NOT LONG after the turn of the century, when Pick was a rawboned, reckless and powerful kid in his late teens, like the rough Salmon River country of Idaho where he has always lived, he and his older brother would often contract with sheep ranchers to pack supplies back into the summer mountain range for the herders.

On one such trip, the first of the season, they were obliged to contend with a string of barely broke pack mules that seemed to have forgotten during the long winter what little they had learned the previous summer. There were six of them, with not a dependable critter in the bunch.

It was about noon on the second day's journey out of Riggins. The mules were loaded heavily and they were climbing east across Bull Creek Ridge on the South Fork of the Salmon, the wildest kind of country. The pack string had been troublesome all morning. The trail became narrowed and steep. The better to handle the mules over this rough spot, Pick got off his horse to lead the string on foot. His brother, riding point, took the reins of Pick's horse and went on ahead.

Slowly Pick climbed along, pulling the lead rope, coaxing the string up the mountainside. On a level stretch of the thin trail the lead mule became uneasy at the jangling of Pick's spurs. The nervous brute would stop every few yards and sit back on the rope. The others in the string would bunch together at the sudden stop. With the heavy loads and the tortuous trail it was touch and go whether or not the skittish beasts could hold their footing.

The next time the lead mule stopped, Pick did a foolish thing. He knelt down to unbuckle his spurs right in the middle of the trail, with his back to the lead mule. The events of the next few minutes kept him busier than a front row fiddler, but Pick has had a lot of time since to figure out exactly what happened and how it happened, and this is the way he reconstructs the action of that almost fatal morning:

The sixth and last member in the string, a short-legged iron gray Mexican mule, the orneriest devil this side of a frustrated Brahman bull, had been given the end position because, among other failings, he was a kicker. When Pick began removing his spurs at the head of the string, the Mexican mule at the rear chose that particular time to try out a new scheme to sabotage the operation. He sank his big yellow teeth into the rump of mule number five. This playful little nip started a Rube Goldberg-like chain of action that Pick Ward will never forget.

MULE NUMBER five leaped forward, shoving number four into number three. Number three was forced hard against the rump of number two, which in turn smashed into number one. It

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"In the old Cherokee Nation"

is to the credit of the lead mule that it made a valiant effort to avoid trampling Pick. There was only one direction open to the frightened animal, straight ahead, and Pick was crouched there.

Before Pick realized what trouble was brewing, the lead mule raised its front quarters and endeavored to clear the kneeling man with a mighty jump. This could have worked, except that the tie rope, holding the string together as a unit, was about four feet too short for this extraordinary maneuver. The stout hemp held fast. The leaping mule was stopped in mid-air and brought abruptly down upon Pick, its front legs before and its hind legs to the rear of the startled man.

Finding himself under the heaving belly of the frantic hammerhead, Pick jumped the only way open to him, off the trail on the down side. As he emerged from under the animal, he tried to prevent a nasty rolling fall by grabbing the pack rigging. His added weight on the overloaded pack made it impossible for the beast to keep the trail. With Pick clutching desperately to two steel lash rings on the packsaddle, the grunting mule rolled off, with Pick on the underside.

By the grace of God, Who must give special attention to mountain men, Pick's back and shoulders hit a patch of soft slide dirt. The tremendous weight of the fully-packed mule was now across Pick's body, supported for the most part by Pick's pinioned forearms. Ponderously the huge bulk moved upon him in the downhill roll. Pick thought that his chest and face would surely be crushed. Caught in the rush of the rolling juggernauts, he had no more chance than a snake in a hog pen. With huge, ugly, steel-rimmed sledge hammers, death was striking at him from every side. Twice a hoof came so near to pulverizing his skull that he could feel the sharp steel slicing through the short hackles at the back of his neck.

He opened his eyes once to have a hammer-like hoof crash into the ground not an inch from his face, filling his eyes with powdered shale. Other near misses ripped holes in his jacket and pounded the snaps from his heavy leather chaps. The turmoil of mad pack mules rolled around him and thrashed its way for another hundred yards downhill until some of the animals came unsteadily to their feet in a little swale. Pick was still clutching the ground, trying to press himself into it, when his brother hastened down to see if there was a spark of life that had not been beaten from his body.

That he sustained only minor bruises and torn clothes was unbelievable to either of them at first. Not until Pick rose to his feet and climbed back to the trail under his own power was his brother convinced that he was not seriously injured.

It took the rest of the day to get the spooked hybrids untangled, repair the torn rigging, and salvage what supplies they could.

Pick didn't do much of the work, though. He just sat there on the trail, contemplating on the magnitude of "The Mission" for which he had surely been saved. But even though some forty years have passed since his deliverance on Bull Creek Ridge, The Mission has not yet been given him. Pick is beginning to think that his Guardian Angel wasted a mighty splendid effort on the wrong man.

Truly Western

(Continued from page 6)

teries, graveyards or any appurtenance thereto such as monuments, markers, crosses and fences.

The once beautiful town of White Oaks, New Mexico, located three miles from Carrizozo, along with its cemetery of more than 300 graves and 200 impressive monuments, has been completely destroyed by the most ghoulish type of vandalism. I have seen the White Oaks atrocity and it is simply appalling. My wife's brother and sister are buried there and so are many of our friends.

In 1962 here in Arizona, the historic ruins of Calabassas had its remaining walls of brick bulldozed into rubble by a farm syndicate in order that they might plant two extra acres of milo-maize.

After forty-five years, Barry Scobee and a few of his friends succeeded in having Fort Davis, Texas, declared a national monument. All of those years they fought to save the quaint old buildings which as late as 1917 were almost intact. It was then the best preserved of all western forts—but that was before vandals hit!

I sincerely hope and pray that your drive succeeds. Compassion, talk and indignation won't get the job done—but strong laws at some level, perhaps State, will.—Bob Keil, 2501 Goyette Avenue, Tucson, Arizona.

Editor's Note: Deadline always seems to catch us before we can make a true check of matters about which we have asked your opinion. Letters are beginning to arrive about the Ghost Town Question, and we'll bring you up to date next issue.

Our Hero

Dear Mr. Small:

It seems that we have *something* in common. I, too, am from Austin. I was raised up on the Bee Caves Road close to the old Marshall Ranch. My grandfather who passed away three years ago was at one time deputy constable of Pflugerville. His name was Robert N. Ayers. The leader of the band known as the Hungry Mountain Boys is my cousin. I'm sure you have heard of them around Austin.

However, my real reason for writing concerns your "Pull 'Em Out" appeal in your June issue of TRUE WEST. I would be more than glad to help out in that respect if I could ever find one to pull out! Each month I go to the newsstand for my copy and get the same old line—"Sorry, just sold the last one."

My question is: Is TRUE WEST a limited publication? I mean, do you only put out a few copies each month ? The news dealers tell me that they only receive a few copies of each issue and if this is true, then I think it unfair to the reading public.

I hate to think that the newsstands will allow one of the greatest magazines on the market today to be crowded out by some men's fiction mess that's lying there covered by last year's dust.

I've got the situation licked on one end anyway. The lady who runs the drugstore across from my house saves me a copy each month. I explained to her that TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES were her best selling magazines by far, so now they are on a rack by themselves at eye level above the other magazines. I BUILT THE RACK MYSELF! The

(Continued on page 74)

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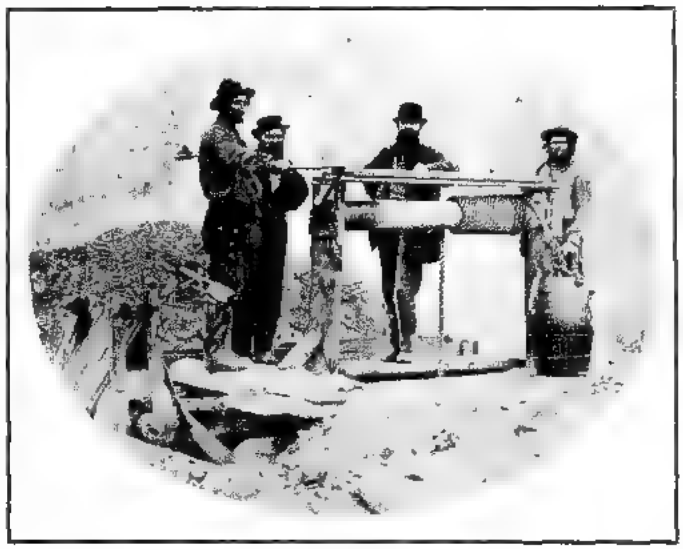

Some Cariboo miners beside their shaft.

Photos Courtesy the Author

GOLD

By the Bucketful!

By FRED LINDSAY

A darned-near unbelievable story of a boy who found the needle in the haystack!

A FAVORITE story told not only around the campsites of Cariboo but of the Kootenays and Okanagan, too, is about Bill Dillar.

Dillar was an American, born on a small side-hill farm not far from the present city of New York. His mother was widowed shortly after his birth and Bill grew up to a life of hardship. His mother had saved a small sum of money from her husband's estate which was intended for the boy's start in some kind of business when he reached manhood.

Newspapers were a luxury seldom enjoyed in the Dillar home. However, in the winter of 1858 Bill came by a New York paper telling of fabulous gold discoveries being made in the mountains of far off British Columbia (called New Caledonia at that time). Very excited about this news, he read and re-read the account to his mother, begging her to give him the nest egg she had saved and let him go to the golden land. He said he knew he would make his fortune and, when he returned to New York, they would be free from worry forever!

The boy ranted and raved about the wealth that was waiting in Cariboo. At that time not only the New York papers but periodicals of all the world's capitals were carrying stories about Cariboo gold finds and the riches of the Fraser and Quesnelle River countries.

Finally Mrs. Dillar gave in to her son's pleadings and let him have a portion of the family savings. Young Dillar boarded a sailing vessel in New York Harbor for Panama. He crossed the Isthmus of Panama, traveled by boat to Vancouver Island, crossed to the mainland, worked his way up to Yale, and joined the rush to the gold fields. According to diaries of that time, there were as many men returning from the goldfields, cursing their luck, as there were going.

One of the men coming down from the Cariboo claimed that all the good ground was taken and that only a rich man had a chance to succeed (which sounds very much like things we hear today in Cariboo). The raggedy and despondent men coming out didn't lessen young Dillar's optimism, although his funds were almost gone by the time he hit Yale, and there were still over 400 miles of trail ahead of him.

When Dillar reached Williams Creek, he found that the "good" ground was, as reported, pretty well all staked. True, there was some ground still open below the Canyon, but everybody told him it would be a waste of time pegging it out. The Canyon was a natural sluice box, said the Wisenheimers, which trapped all the ore. There was no use staking below the Canyon.

DILLAR was plain down-east stubborn. The ground he staked was very deep and he had to take in two partners to help him work it. They sunk a shaft and ran into unbelievable difficulties. They hit the infamous "Cariboo slum," a gooey greenish mass of moving matter, almost like putty in color and consistency, that finds every crack in a mine timber set. This slum is dangerous because it has great weight, is fluid, and moves inexorably to fill whatever hole in the ground a miner has excavated.

Dillar and his companions conquered the slum by simple bull-headed persistence but, when they hit bed rock on the bottom of their shaft, it was darned poor pay. The average miner would have quit—but not Dillar and his partners.

They had gone on the cuff for grub and tools; they were in the glue up to their ears with storekeepers and anyone who would give them credit; but they also had their shaft down about eighty-five feet. It was timbered and the slum was licked. They weren't of a mind to abandon their chances at this fateful

(Continued on page 71)

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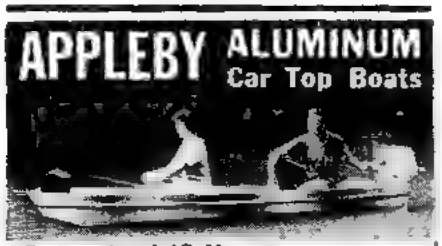
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"Custer's Last Stand": The Painting and the Artist

(Continued from page 16)

the personal flag of General Custer, gained by him at Appomattox.

Rising above the sweeping charge of mounted Indians in the picture at the left, like the very incarnation of savage warfare, is the commanding figure of CHIEF GALL of the Sioux, his rifle raised in the air, directing the charge. LIEUTENANT CALHOUN, Custer's brother-in-law, on a gray horse coming along the ridge of the hill where some of the soldiers had been stationed, is shot and killed. Nearby an Indian, with face upturned and gun thrown into the air, falls from his horse. Below these lies a man with face uplifted in anguish and terror as a riderless horse, crazed by pain and fear, dashes madly into the thickest of the fight.

In contrast to this, is MITCH BOUYER, the half-breed scout, clad in a buckskin suit and hat turned back from his face. With one knee on the ground, he fires a steady shot at the Ogallala CHIEF CRAZY HORSE, whose savage face bears a well-known scar on the left cheek. In the right foreground is CROW KING, chief of the Uncapapa Sioux, on a captured Cavalry horse, as can be told by the U.S. brand on its left shoulder. Directly in front of the onrushing horse, a soldier lies full length on the ground attempting to rise on his elbow, with his face turned to heaven as if in prayer. One noted artist, after studying the face intently, said, "I would not touch that face for $10,000!"

In the foreground, a man bent on one knee bravely picks a shell from his carbine with a pocket knife. Near the center with feet outstretched upon the ground and left hand steadying himself, the trumpeter clings to life and sends call after call to the heedless ears of Major Reno and Captain Benteen, who failed to come and bring reinforcements. Behind the trumpeter, CAPTAIN YATES holds his smoking gun in the air, having just fired at an approaching Indian. In the left background, the Indian TWO MOON, mounted on his pony, fights and pushes his way into the midst of the fray.

At the left foreground is the remnant of the little swallow-tail American flag that pitifully but very proudly marked the line of battle.

EDGAR SAMUEL PAXSON was born April 25, 1852 in East Hamburg, New York, now called Orchard Park. When he was twenty-five years of age, under the haunting spell of the great Western frontier, he resolutely headed West. He arrived in the rough and turbulent territory of Montana in 1877 and, within a year, enthusiastically sent for his wife and son to join him there. He knew in that short time that Montana was where he wanted to be. When his wife, Laura, and son, Loren, arrived by overland route, the family settled in the Montana frontier town of Deer Lodge.

It was during this early period that Edgar Paxson was first exposed to Indians, both hostile and friendly. It is significant that many of the hostile Indians later became his friends, and that both friendly and hostile Indians proved to be the greatest single influence on his colorful life as a frontiersman and artist. He came to admire and respect American Indians greatly, and, as an artist, he was able to capture in his portraits and other paintings, the inherent nobility, strength, and majesty of the Indians. Even in the medicine man, Sitting Bull, the most cunning and incorrigible hostile of them all, Paxson captured and portrayed these dominant qualities.

In 1881, as a full-fledged frontiersman, scout, Indian fighter and artist, E. S. Paxson and his family moved to Butte, the toughest town in the Territory of Montana, where he lived and painted for many years.

The Indian artist's life, however, was interrupted on July 18, 1898, when he as a lieutenant, left for the Philippines in the Spanish-American War. He was forty-six years old but eager to serve his country.

After his return from the Spanish-American War, Paxson again lived and painted in Butte until 1906, when he and his family moved his studio and enormous Western collection of curios to nearby Missoula where he made his home and painted until his death in 1919.

All through the years, Indians, horses, wild life, rivers, mountains, prairies, plains, and early Western history inspired Paxson to record on canvas his sensitive reactions to these strong influences. He was always greatly inspired by what he saw, what he read, and the flow of historic events, but he was happiest when lost in the wilds communing with nature.

Paxson, as an artist, enjoyed a great advantage, in that he understood the Indians well and enjoyed their friendship. He was their "white brother" and they named him "Cot-lo-see" (He Sees Everything). Also he was able to converse with them in their dialects and sign language. Many of the great chiefs, reluctant to pose for others, readily posed for him while he painted and sketched them. Among these famous chiefs, to name a few, were Sitting Bull, Gall, Two Moon, Rain-in-the-Face, Nag-a-shaw, Tendoy, Louison, and a host of others. Paxson portraits of these stalwart chiefs adorn the walls of many museums and private collections throughout the world.

Among E. S. Paxson's other most famous historical paintings are his six murals in the lobby of the House of Representatives in the State Capitol, Helena, Montana, and his historical Lewis and Clark Expedition murals in the Missoula County Courthouse. All of these murals vividly depict some significant frontier event in the history of the State of Montana.

THE PAXSON painting of the Custer battle was finished in Butte, Montana, in late 1899, and remained in Montana for sixty-three years except for a short interval when it was displayed in Washington, D.C., and when it was exhibited at several World's Fairs and Expositions in many parts of the country. Always it received the highest acclaim and viewers were fascinated by the mesmerizing quality it seemed to have on all who saw it. But each time the painting came home to Montana there was the inevitable and perplexing problem of what to do with it and where to hang it. Obviously, one doesn't hang this sort of giant in one's living room. The problem was never satisfactorily solved, although several efforts were made to get the state to purchase the painting. Nothing came of it.

For a time E. S. Paxson placed the huge painting in the Natural Science Hall in the University of Missoula, Montana, where facilities and lighting were completely unsatisfactory. Then for a brief time it was placed in the lobby of

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A preliminary sketch for one of the figures in "Custer's Last Stand," by E. S. Paxson.

the old Florence Hotel in Missoula. Finally, for want of a better place, after the artist died, it was hung in the dimly-lit foyer of the Elks Lodge Building, also in Missoula. There it remained for about fifteen years where comparatively few were privileged to view it. Lost and all but forgotten in the Elks Lodge, it slowly faded into comparative oblivion.

One year and four months ago, representing the Paxson family, I resolutely dedicated myself to the project of perpetuating the name and fame of Edgar S. Paxson, and getting for him and his work the proper exposure and recognition his enormous talent so justifiably deserves. My first step was to confer with Montana state officials to have the mammoth Custer painting placed on loan in the Montana Historical Society Museum in the State Capitol, Helena.

This was arranged and the epic depiction of the Custer fight was placed in the Montana Museum where unfortunately it was under the shadow of the great cowboy artist Charles M. Russell. During its quiet sojourn in the state museum I made every effort possible to get his name and work before the public and cultural art centers. Perhaps it is for others to point out, but this is my story and I feel obliged to say that my personal efforts to secure national recognition and extensive publicity exposure for him have been crowned with much rewarding success in this comparatively short time of a little over a year. Millions of persons who did not know his work have recently become aware of his name, fame, and enormous talent, mostly through my appearances on television and radio programs, and through newspaper stories offered to the press and other media. The newspaper stories appeared in all major cities and towns throughout the country, and many times as front page feature stories.

On behalf of the Paxson family, on February 19, 1963 the Edgar S. Paxson painting "Custer's Last Stand" and another magnificant Paxson work of art, "The Last Gleam," were moved in an over-size truck to the Vanderbilt Whitney Gallery of Western Art in Cody, Wyoming, which is but an arrow's flight from the Custer Battlefield and Monument.

This summer, at the Museum, the painting, together with other exciting Custer material, will be the feature attraction. Dr. Harold McCracken, an outstanding authority on Western Art and History and Director of the Whitney Museum, will be in charge of this spectacular exhibit. All Custer fans are invited to stop by and see the original painting.

Author's Note: If additional information is desired about the artist, his works, or any phase of my struggle to prove that real talent will win out, if given the chance, you may contact me at the following address: William Edgar Paxson, 412 Calmosa Avenue, Whittier, California.

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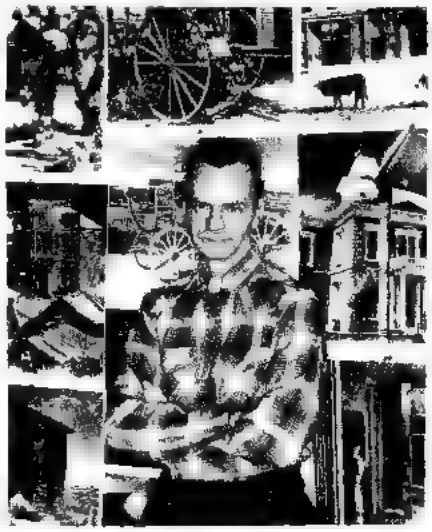

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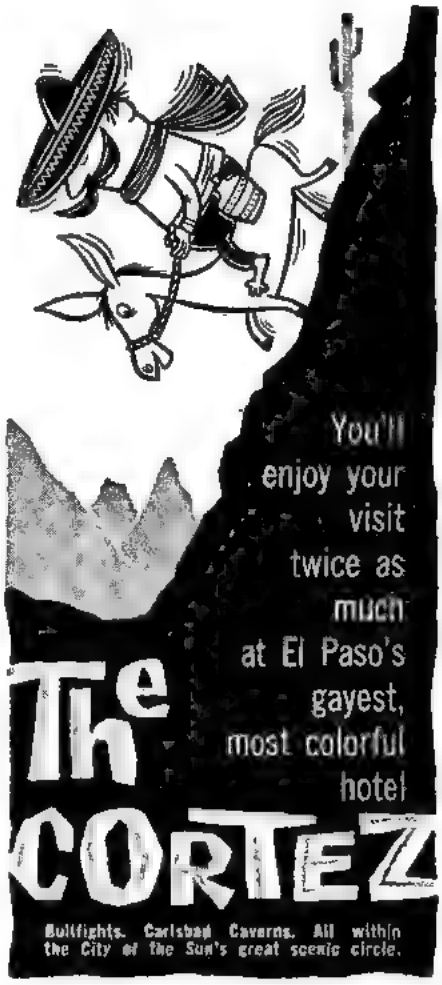

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Making a New Start

(Continued from page 43)

was sent back to the Mance wagon, but I could no longer drive, so Martha took the lines. In fact I went into delirium.

When I awoke, a strange man was bending over me, asking me to open my mouth wide. The swab he used was painful, but the bitter medicine he gave brought relief. Later in the afternoon I saw two women standing at a distance talking to Mother asking what they could do to help. I then knew we had reached Ainsworth.

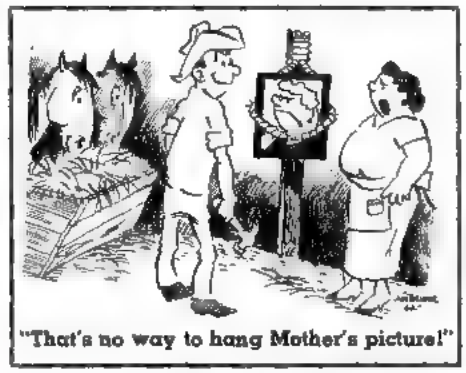
They returned at a safe distance after a while and left delicious food and some clothing for the baby. Our fare for weeks had been pancakes, fat pork, potatoes, and gravy made with browned flour and water. Imagine how good the cookies, cake, pudding and fruit tasted! That was fifty years ago, but never has food tasted better to me. God bless those women; they will never know how much their kindness meant to us.

Some townspeople helped father erect a 14 x 16 shanty near the edge of Ainsworth; then two furrows were plowed around it and there we were quarantined for three weeks. Mother had her first real rest there after bumping over the rough roads for so many days in the wagon. The baby was named Daisy because she came to us from among the wild flowers. She grew to be as sweet as her name, though never very strong.

Jack, one of the sick children, grew worse and refused food. He was buried just a week after Abby. Father and Martha took the body in a rough coffin to the cemetery, being careful not to go through town, as folks feared diphtheria almost like death itself. When I saw the empty wagon return, I went out behind the house feeling miserable and asking God that I might be taken up to Heaven to be with my departed sister and brother.

Father said that he had to go back for the cattle as they could not be left too long. Mother tried to persuade him to wait because some of the children were still sick. But Father had his way, and early the next morning set out to get the stock. Five days later he returned with all of the little herd but two, which had died.

By then it was May 5, and still we had no homestead. Mother worried that it had been over two months since we had left our Iowa home, but still no land "free for the asking." The land around Ainsworth had already been filed on, but after some persistent effort, Father found a man who wished to sell his relinquishment for $125. It took almost his last dollar. The second week in June we settled on that free homestead that had cost such a price.—Reprinted from the book, *Roundup Years*, by Bert L. Hall.



"That's no way to hang Mother's picture!"

(Continued from page 13)

puted that Custer ignored the old axiom of hitting first with the most.

"'SON-of-the-morning-star' was going to his death, and did not know it. He was like a feather blown by the wind, and had to go. He had to fight, because he had to die. This made others die with him." This was the statement of Pretty Shield, the wife of Goes Ahead, one of General George Armstrong Custer's Crow scouts. As the people of another nation might state it, "His fate was on him that day."

Lady Luck, who had perched on his shoulder so tightly during the Civil War that she was known as "Custer's Luck," was still with him at the beginning and had given him his golden opportunity—but Custer was no longer listening to her, or anyone.

Custer knew the approximate location of the village and had been informed of the odds he would have to face. Gibbons knew their numbers, knew that the Indians were not running away, that they were ready to fight. The knowledge that Gibbons had was made available to Terry and to Custer during a conference they had aboard the steamer *Far West* before Custer assumed his separate command.

Custer is always described as a veteran Indian fighter, the foremost on the Plains. Yet, he had not fought Indians in any major pitched battle, his one meeting with the Indians having been the massacre on the Washita. This was reported and referred to as a fight but, in reality, it was another Sand Creek slaughter.

Nothing in Custer's experience, had led him to believe that Indians would dare face him in an actual fight. In his mind, it was a problem of reducing his command to the point where temptation would prove so great they would deliver themselves into his hands.

RIDING along their eastern slope, Custer twice rode to the top of the bluffs that border the Little Big Horn. The first time he was near the defensive position taken later by Major Reno. Custer's purpose was to check on Reno's progress and to let Reno see him on his way downstream to outflank the Indians. After his visit to the top of the bluff, Custer began to realize the magnitude of the task he had undertaken. His first glimpse was enough to make it clear that this was a larger village than he had anticipated.

At this point, he directed his brother Tom to send Sergeant Kanipe back to Captain Benteen with orders to cut straight across country with the pack train to join him. If any mule packs came loose, he was to ignore them and come on with the remainder. More than anything else, Custer wanted men. Benteen had 141 enlisted men and officers. McDougall had 129 men with the pack train. The total would have more than doubled the strength of Custer's immediate command.

Sergeant Kanipe's oral orders to Benteen were, "Bring pack train straight across to the high ground—if packs get loose, don't stop to fix them, cut them off. Come quick. Big Indian camp."

There have been many interpretations of Custer's orders but it is hard to see how they could be construed in any other way than that Custer required men more than anything else. If Custer had had prime need of ammunition or supplies,

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the orders would not have been given to discard any packs that came loose.

Benteen was not with the pack train. Yet, Custer could not abandon the packs to the Indians. He wanted the men, but in order to get them, he also had to have them escort the packs to a safe place.

Near Weir's Point, Custer accompanied by his brother Tom, his nephew Autie Reed, Adjutant Cooke, and Trumpeter John Martin again rode to the ridge overlooking the Indian village. This time, he saw Major Reno advancing with his men as dismounted skirmishers against the Indian warriors at the south end of the village.

A little beyond this point and still following the east flank of the high ridge, he sent Trumpeter Martin as a second messenger to Benteen. Adjutant Cooke wrote the message on paper, as Martin was an Italian emigrant of two years and had difficulty with the English language.

The now famous message read: "Benteen-come on-big village-be quick-bring packs." W. W. Cooke. "P.S. Bring Packs." The second order repeats that of the first. It is certain, from Custer's viewpoint, that he again was requesting that the two detachments unite forces and rejoin him in a hurry. There was no intention on Custer's or Cooke's part to be vague or indefinite in any way. The first "bring packs" was an order to unite with the pack train, and the postscript was a reminder not to abandon it. It would be absurd to interpret the message as meaning that Custer needed the packs more than he needed the men. Custer had split his force into so many divisions that he was caught in a dangerous position. By bringing the packs, Benteen would have to bring the escort. Custer had still not fired a shot and supplies were not yet a factor. It was the men of both detachments that he wanted most of all.

RECEIVING the same message from Kanipe and Martin should have awakened Benteen and McDougall to the extreme urgency, but did it? Benteen had abandoned his search for Indians and was returning to join the main command. He thought Kanipe's message was intended for McDougall, so he sent him on to that officer.

In Benteen's defense, it is not certain that Kanipe presented the message as an order from Custer. Benteen certainly did not interpret it as such, a fault many times associated with oral orders. Still, if the words were repeated as stated, Benteen should not have missed the urgency of the situation.

Two miles nearer the ridge, Benteen received the written message of Adjutant Cooke, delivered by Martin. He inquired of the orderly as to the situation. Martin informed him that the Indians were "skidaddling." Benteen blames his failure to follow orders upon this scant information by Martin. He would have had to retrace his route to join McDougall, or wait in his tracks for McDougall to come up to him.

He chose a third alternative and continued on his way to the ridge where he rescued Reno and waited for McDougall. It was after he reached Reno and learned of the true situation, that an officer was dispatched to McDougall to hurry up the pack train. It was then too late to help Custer, as it really had been all the time.

Coinciding with Reno's arrival on the hill, shots had been heard that marked the engagement of Custer's forces at the middle ford, the beginning of the end.

On Martin's way to Benteen, he had paused on the site of Reno's future defensive position on the hill. When Martin peered down into the valley, Reno's advance had been halted and his battalion was slowly being forced back to the timber.

Mitch Bouyer and three Crow scouts had continued along the high ridge under orders from Custer to keep a check on Reno, while Custer rode down Cedar Coulee behind Weir's Point to its junction with Medicine Tail Coulee. There is one spot on this ridge where the scouts could have seen Reno, watched Custer's progress to the Coulee, and also observed the activity in the Indian camp on the west side of the Little Big Horn. It was a good location for the scouts to pause and check on everything, for it offered an easy escape route if they were attacked, or if they needed to contact Custer. There is only this one area on the ridge where all of these things are possible.

The Crow scouts could see Reno in full retreat toward his final defensive position on the bluff. Bouyer told the other scouts to join the pack train, while he rode to Custer with the news of Reno's retreat. Before going in search of the pack train, the scouts paused to fire a few shots into the hostile village, to watch the meeting of Bouyer with Custer, and the latter's advance to the middle ford.

CUSTER halted his command of five troops where Cedar Coulee meets Medicine Tail Coulee from the south. Mitch Bouyer, the half-breed Sioux scout, had just informed him of Reno's retreat to the hills south of his own position.

As he sat his horse in the obscure little coulee named Medicine Tail, Custer was reaching the climax of his brilliant and turbulent army career.

This was his point of no return, his moment of final decision. He knew that if he withdrew to reunite his scattered forces, it would be the equivalent of defeat. Such a consideration was worthy of only a moment's thought. There really was no choice for Custer, other than to go forward with the headlong, reckless dash that had characterized his most brilliant successes.

He had to be successful; a smashing victory with the old Custer flair would, at least, secure his future army career. It would even strengthen his bid for nomination as the Democratic candidate for the nation's highest office. To hell with Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Terry! One smashing victory would prove that Custer was still destiny's darling, a force that could not be pushed aside into discard. Just as he had been one of the youngest men to ever earn high rank in the U.S. Army, so he might become the youngest President in the history of the United States!

It was necessary to relieve the pressure on Reno to avoid accusations such as followed the Elliot incident on the Washita. If he crossed the Little Big Horn, he would create a diversion, but only by turning the anger of the hostiles upon his own command. Or, he could demonstrate at the ford, while stalling long enough for Benteen and McDougall to reinforce him in time for a genuine offensive.

In the final analysis, this was the only decision that Custer could have made, for he had to press on to salvage victory from Reno's defeat. He decided to attack at the ford. Benteen and McDougall were sure to be somewhere along his back

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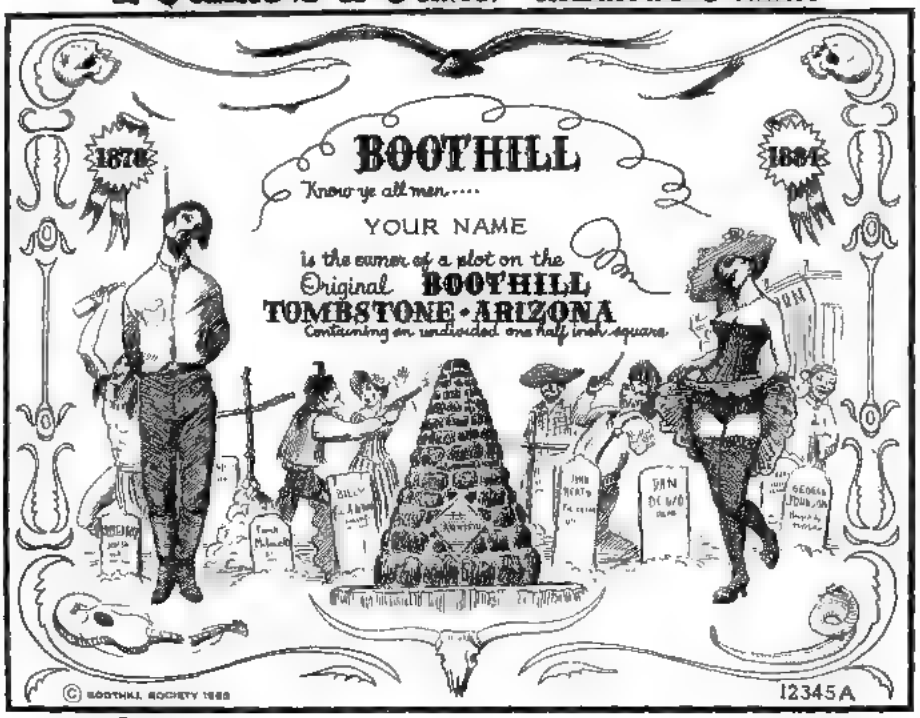

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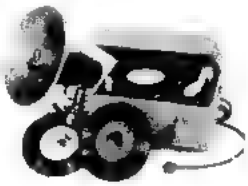

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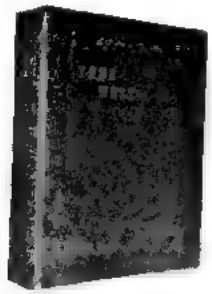

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trail, guided by the two couriers he had sent to find them. If a weakness developed at the ford, he could hold the bridgehead and then sweep forward to the level plains on the other side. Here he could correct his earlier mistakes, organize his enlarged command in a genuine offensive, sweep on to victory and set his feet more firmly than ever on the glory road.

AFTER his conference with Bouyer, Custer had his trumpeter summon his officers for new orders. This time a division of his command was demanded by the urgency of the situation. He ordered Companies 'I' and 'L' under Captain Miles Keogh to a low ridge in the rear of the little plateau between the north and south branches of Medicine Tail Coulee. They would easily be seen from the valley which had been Custer's route to Medicine Tail.

Custer, himself, could not be seen from Weir's Point on the valley. When Benteen and the pack train, or Reno and his men attempted to reach Custer, these two companies would furnish them assistance, if necessary.

With a great flourish of bugle calls deliberately designed to attract attention, not only of the Indians, but of Benteen and Reno, the two companies departed for the ridge, while Custer and Companies 'C', 'E' and 'F' continued down South Medicine Tail for the Little Big Horn ford.

Custer was in the lead, accompanied by his trumpeter, color sergeant, Adjutant Cooke, Captain Yates (commander of the First Division) and Scout Mitch Bouyer. Next came Custer's brother Tom with Company 'C', then Company 'E' with Lieutenant Smith, and bringing up the rear was Captain Yates' own Company 'F'.

Reaching the flats between the mouths of North and South Medicine Tail, Custer or Yates aligned Company 'C' on the right flank in a double column of fours, Company 'E' on the left flank in the same formation, while Company 'F' was held in reserve to the rear of the flats. Custer with his headquarters detachment rode between Companies 'C' and 'E', and all advanced to the middle ford.

Gall, the Sioux chief, is said to have directed the defeat of Reno's command. Several hundred Indians had crossed the Little Big Horn to continue the attack on Reno, who had retreated to the hills south of Custer. Other hundreds had remained on the west side of the stream. When word was brought that Custer had been discovered riding down the eastern side of the Little Big Horn to attack the village, the Sioux around Reno, flushed with their initial success, rode downstream to fight Custer. The Cheyennes and Sioux, at the lower end of the village, had expected the Custer attack, but the earlier Reno diversion had been a surprise—which, perhaps, was Custer's intention.

Some of the Sioux and Cheyennes who had not been in the Reno fight, hid in the willows and brush below the middle ford. Those of the Sioux who had followed Reno across the stream, advanced north along Cedar Coulee on Custer's trail. Those who had remained on the west side of the stream, rode down to join those in ambush along the willows above the ford.

Custer and his staff, between the two forward companies, reached the middle of the stream before a concentrated crossfire was poured into the front of the columns by Indians concealed on both flanks. Finding his exposed position untenable, Custer and his two companies retired to the east bank of the ford. Here, he dismounted his men and sent his horse holders with the cavalry mounts to the rear of the small flats.

INSPECTORS of the field after the battle, differ greatly in their accounts of what they saw at the middle ford. Some said that there were bodies on the

George Armstrong Custer, about 1865

ground and in the water. Others said that there were no bodies, but admitted that there were signs that bodies or heavy objects had been dragged along the ground and through the brush. Indians do not drag bodies of their own killed or wounded; they remove them on the backs of horses. Indian participants stated that there was a big fight. Spent cases and leaden slugs recovered at the site prove that considerable action did take place at the middle ford.

Companies 'C' and 'E' retired in good order, firing as they retreated, until they reached their horses. Custer sent a squad of men to the north bank of South Medicine Tail, to guard against flanking attack by hostiles creeping up that ravine.

In the center, the men were firing random shots at individual Indians crossing the ford directly in their front. The number of Indians opposing Custer was increasing with every moment. A concentrated rush of hostiles crossed the stream and Custer had time for only two ordered volleys of the single shot carbines before they gained the protection of the cut banks, some forty to fifty yards from the waters of the ford.

Custer's men and horses were now out in the open, providing perfect targets. The entire action at the middle ford could not have lasted more then a few minutes. The Indians fired only one or two shots from their shelter before Custer's flanking squad fired on other hostiles making their way, under cover, up the south branch of Medicine Tail.

Custer had to move and move fast. The middle ford escaped national fame as the site of the last stand by a period of only a minute or two. He had been warned by the firing of the companies on the little ridge behind, that other Indians were following his back trail. He had one avenue of escape and took it.

CUSTER mounted his men, gave them column of fours right, crossed them over North Medicine Tail and pushed on north along the same line of bluffs that

he had been following since parting from Reno. When he had first entered South Medicine Tail he had a choice of advancing or retreating; now he had no choice, the Indians were between him and the southern portion of his command. He had lost the initiative. From this point on, he rode where the Indians drove him; the only thing remaining was the Indian's choice of the final ground.

Company 'F' was now in the lead behind Custer, for they had taken no part in the attempted crossing of the ford and were ready to lead the way. Company 'C' was next in line for it had been on the right flank in the action at the ford. Company 'E' was third and last in line.

Mitch Bouyer informed Custer of another ford, a mile below their attempted crossing at Medicine Tail Coulee. There Custer was to make his final attempt to break out of the trap in which he was entangled.

Behind on the little ridge, the desperate emergency had not yet touched the two companies left as an objective for Benteen, McDougall and, perhaps, Reno. Troops 'I' and 'L' had positioned themselves behind the center of the ridge and had fired on the victorious warriors fresh from the battle with Reno, coming north along Custer's trail. The Reno Sioux had combined with the Sioux riding up South Medicine Tail from the river, to completely outflank Custer. Their combined forces made it impossible for him to retreat to the southern segment of his command.

The Sioux continued up South Medicine Tail until they were on the west, south and east sides of the little ridge, forcing the two companies north in Custer's general direction. Custer, in all probability, had given them a rally call on the trumpet, adding to it the personal command of his extended right arm, waving in circular motion over his head, then dramatically pointing forward with arm extended toward the last stand area.

Companies 'I' and 'L' held their positions and fired on the hostiles until they were certain that Custer was in the clear. They then crossed North Medicine Tail to hold a position on the north bank, firing down the ravine at the savages in the rear of Custer.

The Indians say that Custer's men made five stands to fight back. Two of these were at the middle ford. The first was Custer's stand on the flats at the east bank of the ford. The second was on the little ridge, and north of North Medicine Tail, where companies 'I' and 'L' fired on the warriors near the middle ford, insuring the escape of Custer.

It must have been here that Custer realized that Benteen and McDougall were not going to join him in time to be of assistance. They had not yet been sighted, and his present course was leading him farther away from any possible reunion with them.

CUSTER rode at the head of the left column of three companies with his headquarters staff and Mitch Bouyer. Behind, rode Companies 'F', 'C', and 'E', in that order. Custer paced the column with his usual dash and vigor, depending upon his men to keep the pace, or else. Men and horses alike were gaunt and wearied after the grueling punishment of the past few days.

Companies 'I' and 'L', under Keogh, were on the right flank, about a half mile distant, riding up a slight wide

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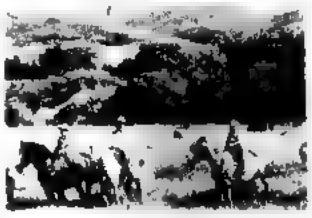

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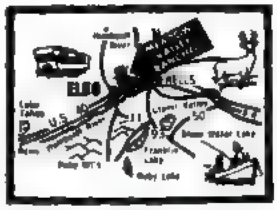

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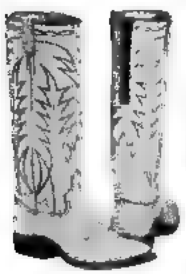

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ravine which gradually narrowed as it approached the elbow of Greasy Grass and Battle Ridges. The shallow valley intersected the Custer line of march at this vitally important junction where Custer's trail, Greasy Grass Ridge, Battle Ridge and Calhoun's Hill joined together in one common area.

The right flank or battalion had the greatest distance to cover, but their road was much smoother than Custer's. The latter's trail was broken with gullies and small ridges. Keogh's Company 'I' was the lead company in a column of fours. Calhoun's company, bringing up the rear, was riding in an extended order, as skirmishers. In an attempt to hold the pursuit in check, Company 'L' would turn their horses to the rear, threatening the Indians who, not yet ready to fight, would keep their distance, bluffing with derisive yells and threatening gestures, until 'L' Company would resume its march.

Unknown to Custer, he had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, for he was to face a far more formidable and numerous foe than he had at the middle ford. Here were all the remaining Sioux and Cheyennes that had not entered the fight against Reno, or against him at the middle ford, plus those who had engaged in those earlier phases of the battle.

When Custer had not forced his way at the middle ford, the Indians knew he had to try again at the lower ford. The, as yet, unengaged hostiles positioned themselves and awaited his arrival. That is where Crazy Horse, the famed Stonewall Jackson of the Sioux, inspired his followers with the cry, "Today is a good day to fight; today is a good day to die; cowards to the rear; brave hearts follow me."

A great many Sioux awaited Custer on the east bank of the river opposite the village to prevent his crossing. Crazy Horse led many more up the long draw that hooks around the last stand area.

Custer, under the guidance of Bouyer, turned at the first opportunity to ride down a wide shallow draw toward the lower ford. The northern ridge of this valley is sometimes known as Greasy Grass.

One group of Sioux, probably numbering less than 100, were to play an important part in the final battle. This band of warriors had climbed a short steep ravine leading from the river to the level of the action area. The ravine forked at the top and the branches led to a small, slightly right-angled ridge, around which Custer made his wide turn into the broad ravine leading toward the river.

THIS CORNER, overlooked by almost all historians, was to prove a key position in the final battle. The east-west side parallels Greasy Grass Ridge and is about forty yards long. The north-south leg is about twenty yards long and is a part of the ridge which Custer followed after his retreat from the middle ford. It continues on to form Battle Ridge.

This small corner position also overlooks the junction of the valley which the right wing had been ascending to rejoin Custer. Diagonally across to the north lies Calhoun Hill.

That this particular spot was a hot corner of hell is attested by the hundreds of Henry, Winchester, Spencer and Springfield empty casings which have been recovered from this site.

The band of Sioux arrived at the protection of the inside corner just as Custer's men were making the left turn toward the lower ford. They were too late to pour a concentrated fire upon Custer and his main command but they did get in a few shots on the laggards, as they made the turn some seventy-five yards out from the corner.

The important part that the corner was to play was in preventing the two companies composing the right wing from combining with the other three companies under Custer.

National Archives

General George Crook, 1875

Troops 'I' and 'L' had been following the broad valley that intersected the Custer trail at this point, immediately in front of the hot corner. When they arrived at the junction, close on the heels of the Custer force, they were greeted with so much fire power that their losses forced them north to what is known as Calhoun Hill and Battle Ridge.

Custer and his three companies had swept on down the valley leading to the Little Big Horn. The east bank of the stream was lined with warriors to prevent his crossing into their village.

Events which have characterized the Little Big Horn as a tragedy of errors continued to unfold. Custer, approaching the vicinity of the warriors, instead of continuing his charge, turned north around the end of Greasy Grass Ridge into the final battle area. This turn of Custer's was the final fatal mistake, but it may have been made when he saw that Keogh and Calhoun had been forced north and he tried to consolidate his forces.

The Indians were on foot. Thinking that Custer would continue his headlong charge upon them, the nerve of the defensive force failed just as Custer changed course, and they ran. The Indians said later that if Custer had continued his course at the full charge, he would have won to the other side of the ford. There would have been little real opposition to his crossing and once he had gained the level ground, there were none to oppose him on the village side of the stream. All were awaiting him on the east side of the Little Big Horn.

Once around the end of Greasy Grass Ridge, Company 'E' dismounted, holding the reins of their horses over their left arms, probably to keep check on the warriors, who were recovering from their fright of a few minutes before. The turn and the dismounted inaction

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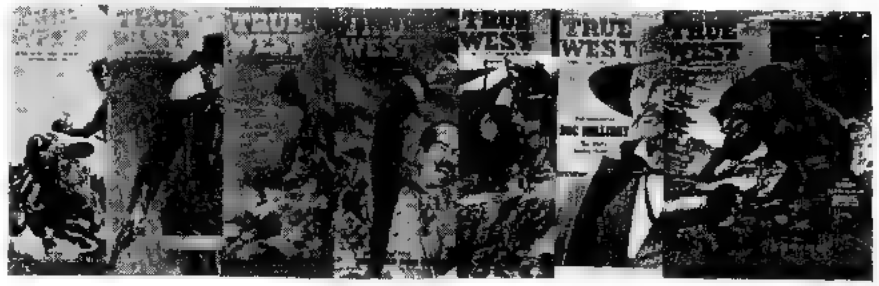

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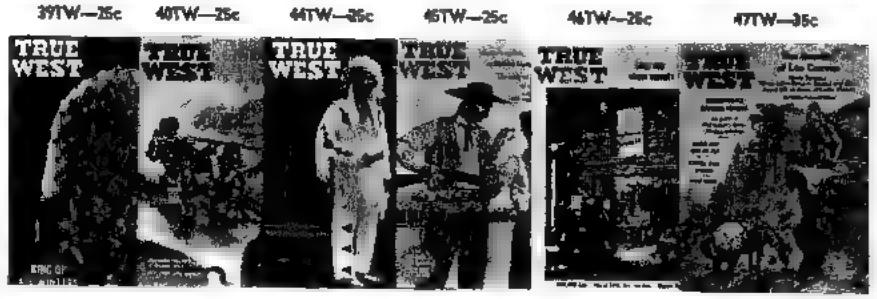

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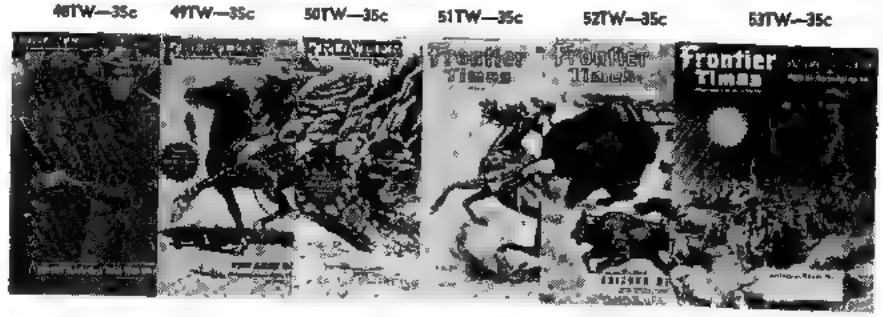

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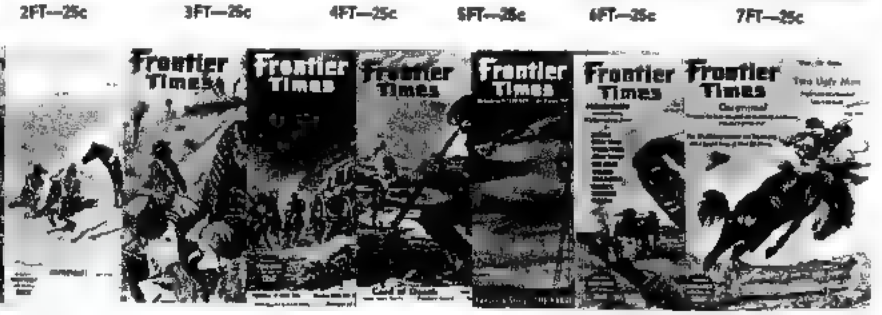

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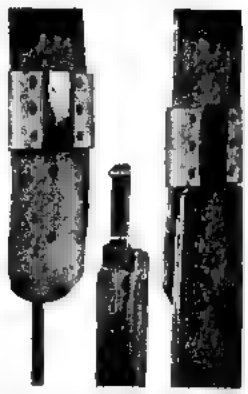

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gave the chiefs time to shame and rally their followers. The last chance was lost and so was Custer—and his men.

Across the path of Custer's force lay a deep, narrow ravine with abruptly vertical, soft dirt sides. It was the type crossing that would have proved hazardous for skilled horsemen on fresh mounts. About forty per cent of the present troops were recruits on horses exhausted by forced marches and scant forage.

The delayed, scrambled crossing gave the Indians time to rally and charge. Troop 'E' had covered the crossing. Their nervous, excited horses, frightened by the gunfire, reared and pulled on their reins, making it impossible for the men to maintain any type of heavy or accurate fire. Some of the horses broke away; some were released so the men could fire more rapidly and with greater effect.

With the majority of 'F' and 'C' Companies safely across, 'E' fell back to the ravine and began its crossing, but time had run out on them.

While many chiefs and sub-chiefs took part in this drive, only Lame White Man, a southern Cheyenne who had been with the northern Cheyennes so long that he was regarded as their war leader, can be definitely placed at this scene of action.

Lame White Man led the charge that split the white line between Companies 'C' and 'E'. The flying wedge rolled 'C' on up the hill, while it trapped the twenty-eight members of Company 'E' in the ravine. With the Indians on both sides and advancing up the ravine from the mouth, the troopers ran up the gully to escape. They soon discovered that they were in a blind pocket, surrounded on three sides by soft dirt walls averaging fifteen feet in height.

WHAT followed must have been an indescribable nightmare for the trapped men. To add to the horror there were also frenzied horses in the gully with them. With Indians firing from above on all sides and others in the ravine trying to brain them with war clubs or axes, the troopers tried to escape by climbing the soft walls. They only succeeded in loosening chunks of dirt, for the highest that any reached was about halfway. Most of these men were shot in the side of the head or body, which would indicate they were hugging the walls, trying to keep out of the way of the horses or trying to climb to safety. After the fight, bodies of horses and troopers were found intermingled in one great mass of dead.

Company 'C', when the split of the column was made by Lame White Man, who perished in the gully with 'E' troop, could not relieve the pressure on their comrades. They were in the same hopeless struggle for their own lives.

The shallow little valley they followed was intersected by numerous ravines which emptied into the flats of the Little Big Horn. As they drew abreast of each of these draws, they were attacked by successive waves of fresh, whooping masses of Cheyenne and Sioux warriors. It was a deafening pandemonium, transported straight from the depths of the nether regions.

Frantically the troopers tried to reload their single-shot carbines or their revolvers. Some repeatedly tripped triggers with the firing pin falling on previously fired and forgotten cartridges. The majority realized the folly of attempting to reload under the press of such an attack, and defended themselves with the butts of their carbines or revolvers, kicking at the paint-smeared foe with their short cavalry boots.

It was a fight reduced to a basic primeval form of savage contact fighting, hand against hand, and even tooth against tooth. For the troopers there was no hope for survival—nothing left but the will to prolong their lives as long as possible, to buy a few more minutes, or even seconds, by selling out as dearly as possible. There were no cowards in the struggle on the Little Big Horn that day.

The men rose to the challenge but when one Indian fell, there were others leaping into his place, anxious for the kill or coup. With no end to the warriors, all they could do was try to club them off, to clear a space so that they could advance to reunite with Custer and form a real defense or attack.

RAPIDLY diminishing in number, the troopers tried to rally to the colors that were beckoning from the hill beyond, but no sooner did they fight free from one horde of Indians than they drew abreast of another draw and met a fresh onslaught. The farther they struggled toward the hill, the fewer the number of Company 'E' and Company 'C' there were to gather with Company 'F', the troop at the head of the column.

Because Company 'F' had been the lead company in the mad dash, it had escaped the brunt of Lame White Man's attack but it was still to take its turn in the savage hand to hand fighting. A fresh mass of Indians, anxious for a part in the final battle, swept down over the ridge between what is now the cemetery and the museum. Company 'F' had no time to change formation to meet attack from this new quarter; their only chance was to outrun it. A few did, gaining the final position known as Custer's last stand.

The rear of the company was hit from the flank and involved in the same maelstrom of fighting that had engulfed 'E' and 'C'. Some of the troop was driven off southward, only to meet the Cheyennes coming from their victories to the southwest and west over 'C' and 'E'. Sioux from the east and southeast helped to encircle the remnant of Company 'F'.

There were no attempts at organized resistance on the part of Custer's three companies, nor were there any counter-attacks. No matter which way Custer's men turned, they were surrounded and hemmed in by overwhelming numbers that made any type of strategy a lost cause.

Nor was there any formal organized action on the part of the Indians, their purpose being to dispatch their quarry in any matter whatever, just so they were totally and completely destroyed.

A dense pall of dust overlay the whole macabre scene. Friends were sometimes mistaken for foes, and there was no time to make positive identification. The higher a man was in the air, the more plainly he could be seen, so they fought close to the ground, some releasing their horses, others shooting them to use as a breastwork. It meant a short extension of life.

CUSTER and his headquarters staff had been far enough in the lead to be spared the successive waves of warriors who had engulfed his three companies. Reaching Battle Ridge, they found that a big band of Indians under Crazy Horse had swept up the hooked ravine surrounding the rise to the north

and east and had cut them off from escape.

It was here that Custer must have realized that there was no hope for his command. Behind him Companies 'C' and 'E' were writhing in their death throes; only a nucleus of his men had survived and were with him. The one semblance of organized resistance was off to the east where Keogh and Calhoun were heavily engaged with superior forces in their own battle for survival.

Custer selected a position a little below the ridge on the west slope to make his last stand. The men with him led their horses in a circle and killed them to form an island of defense. Custer had his colors planted as a rallying point for all to see, then ordered his trumpeter to blow the "Rally," "Officer's Call" and every other call that the trumpeter could think of, to attract and encourage survivors to assemble at this point.

Back at the hot corner, Keogh had attempted to turn down the valley toward the ford to rejoin Custer. He had been held up by the fire at the corner just long enough to be turned north by Gall's pursuing warriors from the middle ford. They were now close enough to Calhoun to be a definite threat to the rear company.

Calhoun, Custer's brother-in-law, commanded the first platoon of Company 'L' on the left. Lieutenant Crittenden, son of the Civil War general, and in reality an infantry officer on loan, commanded the platoon on the right.

Keogh, an ex-officer in the Papal Zouaves, judged that Calhoun Hill on the south end of Battle Ridge would be a good defensive position. He dismounted his men so they could use their carbines and sent the horses off in the care of every fourth man, the horse holders.

Calhoun's company was still in an extended line of skirmishers. Keogh's company, which had been the lead company in the gaining of this final position, was held in reserve on a small ridge directly behind Calhoun. In this position Company 'I' could watch both flanks, support Calhoun, and keep an eye on the draw north of the small hill.

Gall, who had succeeded Black Moon in command of the Indians south of Calhoun, formed his men in two waves. The first wave of Indians was on foot and formed just below the brink of Calhoun Hill. By standing upright for an instant, they could fire on Calhoun's men and offer a fleeting target for the troopers' return shots. When they ducked down again, they could not be seen. The Indians still protected by the low ridges at the hot corner helped to keep Calhoun's men from getting any good, clean shots at Gall's force, by constantly firing upon their positions.

When Gall was ready, he gave the shrill "Ki-Yi-Yi" of command, a final round was fired at Calhoun, and the drive by successive waves of foot and mounted warriors was underway, never to be stopped until all was over.

THE TIME consumed by this final phase was but a short interval. Some of Calhoun's men were overwhelmed practically in the act of dismounting.

No matter whether they were raw recruits, or twenty-year men in Calhoun's Company, they were all men and cast a mighty big shadow that day. Not one man attempted to run and save himself at the expense of others; each of them held his place to the last man and not one gave way. Calhoun and Crittenden died in position with their men.

Lt. William W. Cooke

This was one of the bravest and most heroic stands made in Western History. Each man knew what his fate must be and yet they died facing their foe without yielding one foot of ground while they lived. Their time of mental anguish was mercifully short, as they probably were unable to fire more than one hasty shot before being engulfed.

Keogh's Company eluded the feather-crested tide of warriors temporarily and crossed a ravine between Calhoun's Hill and Custer's position on the main battle ridge. Keogh had probably seen Custer, the colors and heard the rally call—for he marched his men directly toward the last stand position in a disciplined and orderly column.

Crossing the ravine, they were attacked by Crazy Horse and his men on the north or right flank. On their left they were firing upon the Indians that had swarmed over the ridge after the finish of Custer's main force. Surrounded on all sides, Keogh's company died as a group. Some say that Keogh had a leg broken in some way and that he died surrounded by his company sergeants who were trying to protect and aid him.

According to the Cheyenne version and that of various Sioux, Custer had ridden along the battle ridge alone soon after establishing his rallying point. His purpose, evidently, had been to check on Keogh's battalion. Seeing they were attempting to make their way to the colors, he gave them what encouragement he could, riding along the west flank and waving them on.

He turned to ride back to the final position and was killed a short distance from the final stand area. He was struck in the left chest and left temple by bullets. The chances are that he was killed by Sioux, but the Cheyennes were the first to reach his body and count first, second and third coup. This is one version of how Custer met his death—there are others.

Estimates of the number of men who took part in the final stand vary from forty to approximately one hundred. Forty seems to be a conservative guess. With their finish, the battle of bullets was over and the Custer battle of words began.

One version of the death of Custer is startling because it bluntly states that this mythical hero committed suicide. An interpreter who interviewed over fifty Sioux who took part in the battle, asked each why Custer was not scalped or mutilated. Over a third replied, "Who would mutilate a woman?" The implication was that Custer had killed himself

The first scouts carrying news of the disaster back to Ft. Lincoln reported Custer a suicide. The first news that reached Mrs. Custer implied that this was the case. An officer fighting with Reno wrote his wife at Ft. Lincoln that Custer had shot himself. Contemporary authorities on Indian habits and customs stated their belief that the reason Custer was not scalped or mutilated was that he was a suicide.

It has been said that it was Custer's standing order to all officers of the Seventh Cavalry, that when they were escorting his beautiful wife through hostile territory, she was to be shot if she were in danger of capture. With all his hopes, plans, ambitions for the future destroyed with the death of his men, with nothing to look forward to but capture and torture, why isn't it a logical answer?

Nevertheless, that Custer committed suicide is hard to believe. It is improbable—but possible, for the report hangs on and on. The belief is common among Indians who fought on both sides of the battle, but whites find the theory unpalatable.

One reason offered why Custer was not mutilated was that two Cheyenne women guarded him throughout the first night, driving away any that might have had such intentions. They did state that one Sioux cut off a finger or part of a finger. However, this was not a Sioux characteristic but a Cheyenne trademark or way of identifying their work. The sign language for Cheyenne is sawing the edge of one hand over the wrist or palm of the other.

Custer's Luck would have held good had he retained his entire command. If he had hit the Indian village at the same location and time he assigned to Reno, his would have been the victory. Certainly, no Indian force had ever before sustained a charge by as many men as were in the Seventh Cavalry.

The village on the Little Big Horn was, at the time of Reno's attack, in a state of shock and surprise. The terrain was favorable to one of Custer's famous hell-for-leather charges. Custer fumbled the ball badly at the start and was never to regain possession. His time had come, and every move he made was part of a pattern that led to the inevitable conclusion. The sorry part was that he had to take so many with him.

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WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

By The Old Bookaroos

As a service to those of you who do not have a bookstore handy—or a library from which you can obtain publishers' addresses—we will forward your requests and orders (until further notice) provided the letters are addressed as follows: Name of publishing house, c/o Western Publications, Book Review Section, P. O. Box 5008, Austin 3, Texas.

RUSSELL AND THE NORTHERN ROCKIES

Frontier Omnibus (Montana State University Press, $12.95), edited by John W. Hakola, brings together in one handsome volume twenty-seven source-type articles dealing with the exploration and development of the Northern Rocky Mountain region. The first of these is the day-to-day journal of Francois Antoine Larocque, fur trader of the Northwest Company who made a journey of discovery to the Rocky Mountains in 1805 and was the first white man to visit the country of the Crows on the Yellowstone River. The final chapter is an account of pioneer ranching in central Montana, written in 1882-1883. Between them are selected overland narratives, accounts of Indian wars and peace councils, diaries and family letters, written at the time by the individuals who participated in the stirring events described.

Although none of the articles is printed here for the first time, most of them are extremely rare in their original form and were not available to the average reader until the appearance of this book. In some cases, such as "Montana As It Is" by Granville Stuart, only a few copies of the 1865 publication are known to exist.

Appropriately, reproductions of paintings by the famous Montana artist, Charles M. Russell, have been used on the cover and as endpapers and there are sixty line illustrations by this artist throughout the text. The latter were not taken from the originals, unfortunately, but are copies of copies and have lost much in reproduction.

SAVAGE AND CIVILIZED

The Comanches made strong medicine in the Southern Great Plains and numerous whites and border Mexicans lost their hair, horses and women to these hit-and-run horseback warriors and hunters.

Emmor Harston has put a lifetime of study into his book, *Comanche Land*, (Naylor, $5.95), and presents an interesting survey of the Comanche in his plains habitat. He spoke the Comanche tongue, lived in their camps and learned their ways from personal experience.

Harston has some ideas about both the Cabeza de Vaca route and the origin of the southwestern mustangs that some folks will fuss about. He provides a lot of solid detail about Comanche living, social life, ethnology and artwork.

The Cherokees (University of Oklahoma Press, $5.95) by Grace Steele Woodward is an excellent new contribution to The Civilization of the American Indian Series. The author has unearthed much new material as a result of studying 1,300 previously unpublished tribal records as well as unpublished ethnological data and manuscript records of white officials.

The most progressive of the civilized tribes, the Cherokees reached a higher degree of civilization than any other. They invented a table of characters to represent syllables; also, they devised a practical form of government, originated a system of courts and law, published newspapers in both Cherokee and English, and many members, such as Will Rogers, Stan Watie, William P. Ross and Lynn Riggs, distinguished themselves as politicians, military leaders, orators and literary men.

In Colonial times, the aggressive Cherokees dominated the weaker tribes of the southern Appalachian Plateau and rebuked the first whites who tried to invade their homeland. The U.S. government forced the tribe, at gunpoint, to move to Oklahoma Indian Territory in order to free eastern colonists from continual Indian harassment. The trail of tears left by Cherokees when driven across the South to Oklahoma is one of many sad events in the lives of conquered American Indians. Recommended.

INDIAN FIGHTERS

From 1754-1774 the Appalachian Mountains represented the American West. In *Forth to the Wilderness*, a Mentor Book, 75c, Dale Van Every tells of the military and diplomatic wars waged along Colonial borderlands and historic men who fought them: Washington, Franklin, Braddock, Sir William Johnston, trader George Croghan, Henry Bouquet, and the Indian Hannibal, Ottawa chief Pontiac.

Those were rugged times when Indians living like jackals desperately fought the ragged frontiersmen in an attempt to hold on to their hunting grounds. The facts are here without reams of documentary notes.

Shannon Garst has landed another nice frontier book for the juvenile trade. It is *Frontier Hero: Simon Kenton* (Messner, $3.25).

One of the great heroes of the westward movement, Kenton helped explore the unmapped Kentucky and Ohio country. He aided George Rogers Clark by organizing a group known as "Simon's Boys." The boys trounced the Indians raiding the westbound emigrant trails. While Simon was at home in the wilderness, he was unable to cope with the complications of civilized life. Good family reading.

The Indian Campaign on the Staked Plains, 1874-1875 (Panhandle-Plains Historical Society, Canyon, Texas, $10) was compiled and edited by Joe F. Taylor from the military correspondence in the files of the War Department. The first half of this book was issued as Publication No. 34 in 1961 by the Society and the second half as Publication No. 35 in 1962. It is entirely appropriate that the two publications be combined in this attractive book and offered to other Indian war buffs, historians and libraries —Society publications are distributed only to members. General Orders, Special Orders, and Reports plus other military correspondence and telegrams, enable the readers to trace the strategy and the results of this campaign that opened the Llano Estacado to settlement. The use of the actual documents provides an unusual opportunity for the study of internal structure and workings of our Indian fighting army. Sherman, Sheridan, Pope, Augur, Mackenzie and Miles are among the names that recur frequently in this book. A bibliography, an index, a large folding map, and one drawing by the noted Plains artist, Harold Bugbee, plus some useful notes by the compiler add to the value of this volume. Limited to 400 copies. Recommended.

MINING LORE

Bringing together the stories of the American mining rushes is a capital theme for a book. Such a book has just been released by the University of Oklahoma Press, $5.95, and is called *The Bonanza West*, the story of the western mining rushes 1848-1900. William S. Greener, the author, has dug into odd corners everywhere for interesting source material. His bibliography is a nice contribution to mining Americana.

While all of the mining rushes had much in common, there was something to distinguish each from the other. Cold, snow and ice tormented the Klondikers, high altitude at Leadville knocked off the lungers and asthmatics, while heat and thirst laid them all low around Goldfield and Death Valley. While this book is red hot on history and lore of western mining, it also has a lot to offer overland collectors and there's a good deal on badmen, Indians and pioneer writers. The half-tone illustrations are some of the sharpest we've seen.

FROM MEXICO BY SEA

The discoveries of Christopher Columbus from 1492 to 1512 opened a century of exploration that sent many Spanish seafaring expeditions along the coasts of the peninsula of Baja California in Mexico and of California itself. These early Spanish sailing explorations are capably recorded in *From New Spain By Sea To The Californias 1519-1668* (The Arthur H. Clark Co., $9) by Maurice G. Holmes.

Plundered Mexican treasure provided Cortes money with which to build and equip ships for additional adventures. The course of Spanish sea explorations has long been known but new information reported by the author gives us a better knowledge of the character, motivation and rivalry of seamen like Cortes, Alvaredo, Cabrillo and the Mexican viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza. Many other historical discoveries are revealed in this illuminating volume. The first class bibliography and several maps made by early explorers help to make this an extraordinary book.

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Fishing on the Llano

(Continued from page 39)

tween some catclaw bushes.

Charlie said, "Hold it, Beck," and Papa said "Whoa" to the mules. Quick as the wagon stopped, Charlie whistled sharply to the jackrabbit, making him sit up at attention—then shot him with his .22.

I jumped off the wagon and raced out to bring in our kill. Behind me, I heard Charlie say, "Put a batch of jackrabbit liver on your hook, and you can't hardly keep an old channel cat fought off it."

A LITTLE farther on, Charlie had Papa stop the mules again, pointing out a huge wasp nest hanging in a bluethorn bush.

Papa said peevishly, "Now, Charlie, you don't aim to mess with that old thing, do you?" And Charlie said, "Well, Beck, I don't aim to hit that river without plenty of bait." And then Papa said, "Well, you hold off till I get these mules out of the way."

So Charlie got down and waited until Papa had driven the wagon and mules a safe distance down the road, then headed for the wasp nest.

We all sat in the wagon and watched breathlessly. That nest was big as a Mexican's straw hat and black with hundreds of wasps. If Charlie made a slip, he was sure in for a bad wasp-stinging.

But Charlie knew what he was doing. He walked right up to the nest, and with a movement that seemed almost casual, reached out and plucked it from the bush. He shook the nest gently to dislodge the wasps clinging to it, then tucked it quickly inside his shirt front.

The wasps rose in a black swarm around him, but seemed baffled when they couldn't locate their nest. They let him walk away with it, too, without stinging him once. We watched Charlie come and climb back into the spring seat with his wasp nest, knowing we'd seen a miracle.

Papa started the mules down the road again, still grumbling. "One of these times," he told Charlie, "them wasps are going to catch on and chase you back to the wagon. Then we'll have us a big free-for-all runaway on our hands."

But Papa was wrong. Many times afterward, I watched Charlie perform that same stunt, and not once did he get stung. One time I tried it and nearly got stung to death. I don't know yet how Charlie did it.

The wagon lumbered along the road winding through the hills. The steel rims of the heavy wheels crushed pebbles, and when we crossed the dry washes, the wheels made grinding sounds in the sand. The sun grew warmer; Charlie's hounds moved up to travel under the wagon in the shade.

We rolled down into a deep canyon where the timber stood tall along the banks of Honey Creek, and Charlie left us there. "Meet you at the river with a bait of squirrels for dinner," he promised.

He made good his promise, too. We saw the smoke of his campfire spiraling up through the trees as we drove down the last perilous slant into the river canyon, with brakes locked and hind wheels dragging.

Beyond the trees, on the opposite side of the canyon, rose sheer limestone cliffs whose walls were green with ivy clinging to the cracks and crevices. Somewhere in between the trees and the cliffs was the river. We couldn't see it yet; but we could hear the rush of shoal waters racing over the boulders, and the fine sound sent a chill of pleasure through us.

Then, at last, we were down in the canyon bed and Papa was pulling the sweaty mules to a halt under centuries-old liveoaks and elms. And there was Charlie, squatted beside his fire and skinning five squirrels and a couple of bobwhite quail.

We paid little attention to Charlie's game, however, for now we could see the water, right out there beyond a short expanse of polished stones that glittered white in the sunlight.

Water! Cool, sparkling, racing, foaming water! Only a boy who has grown up on a dry-land farm where every drop of water used on the place is drawn by a rope and pulley from a sixty-foot well can appreciate the luxurious wastefulness of a whole river of running water.

Not even our appetites could keep us out of it. With shouts of excitement, we leaped from the wagon and raced barefooted out across the litter of sun-scorched rocks.

"Now, don't get in that deep water below the shoals," Papa called after us.

But we'd been here before. We knew where to go. We never broke stride until we'd plunged in up to our waists, clothes and all, knocking water high.

THERE in that shallow pool for the next half hour we were wild things, leaping and shouting, swimming and diving, getting into uproarious water fights. Now and then one of us just lay still, holding to a rock, while the current tugged at our clothes and the perch and minnows nibbled at our feet.

Once Cricket, who was seven, floated completely out of her dress and sat deep in the water, crying for shame at her nakedness while Bessie and Stella raced frantically downstream to rescue the dress.

Then Papa came to take us back to camp, where we sat dripping and wolfed down fried squirrel and quail, along with soggy cornbread that Charlie had fried in the skillet.

The two hounds sat close by and waited in wistful patience for the leavings, and under a nearby oak stood the mules, munching their corn and occasionally throwing up their heads and pointing their ears toward some unfamiliar scent or sound.

A gentle breeze moved up the river canyon, drying our clothes, making our skins deliciously cool. In the trees above us the constant dry whirring of the cicadas was a soothing symphony in our ears.

After a while, Charlie set a big bucket of water on the fire. When the water came to a boil, he got out his wasp nest and dipped it into the hot water to toughen the grubs, then handed the nest to me.

"Now, I want you younguns to catch a fish for every grub in this nest," he said. "It's catch fish, or go without supper."

We got out our cane poles and lines and walked down and fished in the limpid pools among the willows and boulders. We baited with the wasp grubs.

Sometimes our bait was in the water, and sometimes it was hung in the top of a bush, but we caught fish—bluecats, yellowcats, channel cats, speckled bass and goggle-eyed perch. As we caught them, we put them into a tow-sack we kept tied to a willow branch that let the sack hang down into the water.

We had the sack pretty full when a

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big water moccasin found it. He tried to get to the fish and we had an exciting fight with him before we killed him with sticks and stones.

By that time, one of the girls had misplaced our wasp nest or let it float away on the current, so we had to search for other bait. I favored hellgrammites, little brown, finger-length creatures that lived beneath half-buried rocks in that shallow shoal water. But I couldn't get the girls to help me catch them.

If you didn't catch a hellgrammite right, he'd wrap around your finger and pinch the blood out; the girls couldn't stand that. They spent their time chasing big yellow-winged grasshoppers through the tall cockleburrs.

NOBODY had paid any mind to little Charles until we heard him yell, "I've got a fish!" Charles was only five, really too little to catch a fish. But he had one now. We could tell by the sound of his voice.

Also, we heard the splash. We all stopped our bait hunting and ran to where Charles stood in the edge of the shoal water. His line was taut and his pole bent double. Eyes as big as saucers, he clung to it, jumping up and down and screaming, "I've got a fish! I've got a fish!"

He sure did, too. We got a glimpse of it as it lunged toward a grassy bank. A huge forked tail curled up out of the water and slapped the surface and disappeared.

"Golly, what a whopper!" I said and ran to grab the pole. But Charles wouldn't turn loose.

"He's my fish!" he screamed. "You get away. This is my fish."

"But you can't land him," I said, "He's too big."

"He's mine," Charles cried. "You get away!" He ran through the water to get away from me. The fish gave another lunge, knocking water high. Charles lost his footing and fell down, but he didn't lose the pole.

"Papa! Papa!" Ethel screamed, racing down the river to where Papa and Charlie were setting out trotlines. "Come see the big fish Charles caught."

The fish started for the swift shoal water, jerking heavily, keeping Charles off-balance, dragging him stumbling and falling farther downstream.

"Hang onto him," I yelled. "Don't let him get away."

When the big fish got into the swift water, it began to look as if he had caught Charles! Charles would fall down and go nearly under, then get up again and set back on the fish. Then the swift current would wash his feet out from under him again.

"Don't lose him," Stella shouted. She and Bessie were following Charles down through the shoals, trying to catch up.

"He's going to get away," I said, and raced down the bank to get ahead of the fish.

"You let me alone," Charles yelled above the roar of the water. "This is my fish!" He clung desperately to the pole, bobbing up and down as the big fish dragged him farther and farther downstream. He was screaming at me to let him alone when he went under, still clinging to the pole.

I stood paralyzed on the bank, realizing for the first time that Charles was in danger. The big fish had dragged him into deep water. I looked for him to come up, but he didn't. The river had swallowed Charles, just as it had swallowed Grandpa.

FOR AN INSTANT I saw the rolling, tumbling water as Mama saw it—treacherous and terrible. Then Charles' head bobbed up, and I started screaming for Papa.

Suddenly Papa was there, plunging out into the river, with Charlie right after him. Papa got hold of Charles and lifted him up out of the water.

Charles still clung to the pole, kicking and screaming. "That's my fish!" he spluttered. "You let me alone!"

Charlie laughed his big rollicky laugh then grabbed hold of the pole. "We ain't trying to take your fish away from you, Charles," he said. "We're just trying to save you from him. How'd you like to get fish-et?"

Charles' mouth fell open at that thought. He released his grip on the pole and Papa waded to the bank with him.

Charlie followed, easing the big fish into shallow water. "Lordy mercy!" he said as the top fin cut the surface. "How'd such a little youngun ever get hold of a fish like that?"

Papa said proudly, "It don't take a big feller to catch a fish. It just takes one that'll hang with him."

Papa sat Charles down, where he stood, dripping and important. Papa walked back into the water and slipped a hand into the fish's gill and eased him onto the bank.

The big yellowcat lay on the grass with his tail crooked to one side, his gill vents opening and shutting.

"He'll weigh twenty-five pounds!" Papa exclaimed.

Charlie snorted. "That's a thirty-pounder if I ever saw one!"

We children stood astounded. Here the baby in our family had caught a thirty-pound yellowcat!

Charlie glanced around at the rest of us and said, "Well, Charles has brought in his supper."

"We got fish," I said lamely. Compared to Charles' fish, ours didn't seem like much now.

Papa put the yellowcat on a stringer. "Well, then, we'll take this one home to show Mama," he said. He dragged the fish back into the water and staked him to a willow bush.

We ate supper while the sun sank behind the ridges. We ate beside the campfire with the smoke curling up through the tree tops. We sat in our wet clothes, with our faces sunburned and the tough skin of our bare feet strangely white and shriveled from so much water.

We ate fish fried to a crisp brown; fish we'd caught ourselves, the first fish we'd eaten for a whole year. Fish was our entire meal—meat, salad, vegetable and dessert. We sat dangerously close to the skillet of bubbling, popping fat and pounced upon each piece of fish the instant it was forked out; it was likely to be another year before we ate fish again.

Finally, Charlie gave up in despair. "I'm telling you, Beck," he said, "them younguns is holler to their heels."

So Papa took over and fed us fried fish until we were stuffed. Then we lay back on our bed quilts, watching the fireflies in the darkness and listening to the river sounds—the rush of the water over the stones, the hoarse croaking of the big bullfrogs, and the shrill piping of the little frogs. From down the river came the lonesome booming of a hoot owl, and closer at hand the chattering bark of a fox.

Papa and Charlie started telling more tales as they cleaned up pots and pans.

LICEN
ELECTRON

We wanted to stay awake and listen, but the sound of their voices grew fainter, and in spite of ourselves, we drifted off to sleep.

Sometimes when I hear a fisherman brag about how fortunate he is to be able to leave home at noon and be back with a string of fish in time for dinner that evening, I feel a great sympathy for him.

Old Forts and Buried Treasures

(Continued from page 37)

the well and the back door, I hit pay dirt!

I still have some of the loot and so does T. W. We again had managed to turn a long shot into a profit. But this was not what we were after—so back to Deming and a new start.

THE NEXT DAY there were only traces of snow remaining in the low spots across the desert. We were in exceptionally good spirits as we headed into the foothills about thirty miles north and east of Deming. The place we were going was at one time a waystation for wagontrains and a small detachment of cavalrymen had been stationed there to accompany the wagons through a hazardous part of the westward journey.

This settlement had had a saloon, possibly two stores, and quarters for the soldiers and a doctor. The doctor's cache was what we were after. We had almost positive proof of its exact location. We knew we could go right to it and would also have a good chance of finding one or two small pots that are always around a location like that.

As we headed into the mountains we noticed that on the north side of the hills the snowdrifts were getting deeper. We were on an old abandoned road that had not been used or maintained in years and it was getting rougher all the time.

Finally we were driving a short distance and then getting out and shoveling snow. The trail was almost impassable. We were still about five miles from our destination when it happened. Heading down a steep, snow-covered slope we saw the bottom, and it looked like it was five feet deep in snow and about fifty yards across.

We decided to get back up and out. In trying to stop we hit an icy spot and the old wagon went into a slide, crashing into a rock and slicing open the rear tire. That was one hell of a spot, halfway down in a ditch with a blown tire. We managed to dig the wagon out, block it up, and change the tire. Fortunately, I had a set of chains with me and, after a lot of sweat, got them on. By alternately picking the back end up and letting it fall sideways, we got back in the ruts. I still think that if that road had been one degree steeper, we would have had to stay there all winter.

Rolling along back to Deming we talked it over and decided that it would be impossible to get in again until spring, so there was nothing to do but head back to Dallas and wait until another year. We got home just in time to relax and enjoy Thanksgiving, and we were thankful for that rock that cut the tire and made us back out.

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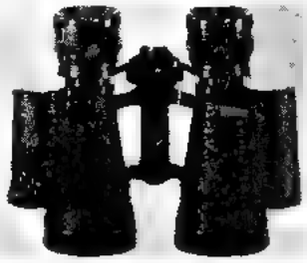

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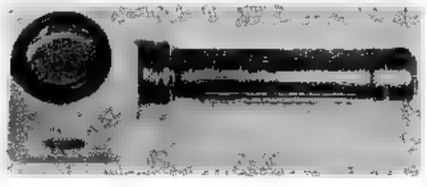

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A Scout for General Howard

(Continued from page 45)

possible, discovering the exact whereabouts of the Indians, who were thought to be over toward Fox Valley. We took a northeastward course. We saw no signs that day and camped that night on Long Creek, about eight miles above the town of that name.

The next morning we descended the creek, soon reaching the open country. We passed Thomas Keeney's place but looked in vain for the next ranch house. I knew about where the house was situated and could not account for my failure to see it now. As we came a little nearer we noticed that the chickens were out of their yard and huddled together in the branches of a tree. By this time we were close enough to where the house had stood to solve the mystery of its non-appearance. The pile of ruins was still warm. Although we were aware that Indians were probably not a great many miles away, we did not believe they were very close to us and rather ascribed the fire to accidental causes rather than to the redskins. The ruins of the next ranch house were smoldering when we reached it and then it dawned upon us that we were probably close on the trail. From then on we proceeded with great caution.

The next house was burning and far off we could see the flames leaping skyward and the smoke curling up in great clouds. Here we saw our first Indian, but evidently he thought that we were advance scouts of the army, for he quickly rode out of sight. In a few minutes we came in sight of the party of Indians which had passed through Long Creek the day before and which was now headed toward the Middle Ford of the John Day.

The inhabitants of this town, and settlers living nearby, had constructed a log fort and stockade and in it were gathered the population of the town and those who had come in from surrounding ranches. When the Indians reached this place they attempted to send a small force into the fort on the pretext of being friendly. Wisely, and fortunately for those inside, the warriors were refused admission. Further parley followed, the Indians endeavoring to effect an entrance through some ruse and each time meeting with a repulse. Finally, when they saw that the whites could not be deceived, the war party passed by within 200 yards of the stockade without offering in any way to molest property.

There were probably between 600 and 700 Indians—mostly Bannocks and Paiutes. The old men, women and children formed the van, the fighting men the rear. With the Indians were some 2,000 and 3,000 head of horses and these were herded and driven by those unable to fight. The wickiups, personal property and plunder were packed on poles which were dragged by the horses. This advance did most of the plundering and pillaging.

Here at Long Creek we met Colonel Bernard, who was the real fighter of the army. He asked me where I had come from and what I had seen of the Indians and I told him all I knew. I told him of conditions at Susanville and he very kindly placed a small detachment of troops at our disposal to guard property at Elk Creek. Austin accompanied the soldiers back.

With the army were about thirty scouts, recruited mostly from Arizona and in command of Rube Robbins. While these scouts were well acquainted with Idaho and that portion of Oregon lying near the Southern boundary, they were unfamiliar with this region and Colonel Bernard was looking for a man who could pilot them northward through the mountains. He proposed that I go with them and I accepted his offer to act as guide, though no actual enlistment was required of me.

GENERAL HOWARD'S plan was to make no attempt to stop the Indians, but rather follow them closely and keep them headed northward if possible, planning to surround and capture them on the Columbia River. He was afraid that if the Indians were pushed too hard they might make a dash across the Columbia before he could place troops and boats there in sufficient numbers to check them while he cut off their retreat.

During the whole time the Indians were marching northward, troops had been gathering along the Columbia River, but their movements were very slow. Up to this time but one battle had been fought in this region, the battle of Silver Creek, in which the Indians held their own and might be said to have been victorious. As to General Howard's ability as an Indian fighter, opinions differ, but that he was sincere in his belief that it would be a disastrous policy to push the Indians too hard, there is no doubt in my mind.

The Indians did not go very far out of their way to commit depredations, but confined themselves strictly to their line of march, evidently wishing to delay hostilities until they were reinforced by their Umatilla allies.

We moved slowly, going from Long Creek north across the Middle Fork of the John Day, thence to the North Fork and down on Camas Prairie toward Pendleton. Our route was marked on every hand by evidences of destruction and carnage. Sometimes we found ranch buildings razed to the ground by fire; again simply ransacked, furniture destroyed, clothes, carpets, etc., stolen, windows broken and goods scattered about. Occasionally we found a white man murdered by the savages.

At all the ranches the stock had been driven away or killed, and one had only to notice the dead horses and cattle along the road to know that the Indians had passed that way. At one ranch on Birch Creek we found a baby carriage drawn out from under the arbor leading to the door of the house and in the carriage was a dead colt. At another place, evidently a dairy farm, in Camas Prairie, our attention was attracted by a huge pile of butter stacked up near the house. From the appearance of it, the little Indians had used it as a toboggan slide. As we approached one home we noticed a high white pyramid. At first we could not make out what it was but as we drew nearer, we saw that it was composed of dead sheep, several hundred of them. One of the most pitiful and frequent sights was that of a dead lamb tied between two posts so that it could not move and under its body the ashes of a small fire showing that it had been burned to death. Around these dead lambs were always small moccasin tracks, indicating that this was the work of the children.

The scouts always moved in front and were followed by the cavalry, the infantry, with pack train and artillery bringing up the rear. Next in command after General Howard were Colonel

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Forsythe and Brevet-Colonel Bernard.

When we reached the headwaters of the North Fork there were two courses for the Indians to leave the country, by Butter Creek or by the Grand Ronde River. By a little maneuvering we turned them from the Grand Ronde and they started down Butter Creek. Here we fought a battle.

A SUCCESSION of low hills sloped away westward, forming an ideal place for the Indians to make a stand and that they did. When we came up, the hillside was fairly alive with Indians and they commenced heavy firing in our direction. The scouts fell back, the cavalry was ordered to the front and formed into two lines, and the men were ordered to dismount. Then the Gatling gun, the only one with the army, was brought up. In less time than it takes to tell it, it was out in front of the army and on its way up the first hill.

The redskins were on the second hill, while between the two was a smaller elevation within two hundred yards of the Indians. Slowly the horses mounted the first hill, reached the summit, and then to the astonishment of all, kept on their way to the smaller elevation. The Indians could not understand such apparently foolhardy actions and they stood thunderstruck, not even offering to fire. Had they not been overcome by the audacity of the act, our men would certainly have met death.

As the lead horses reached the summit of the elevation they whirled around, the carriage was unlimbered, and in an instant a perfect storm of bullets was carrying death and destruction to the ranks of the red warriors. The Indians scrambled from their hiding places and rushed pell-mell over the summit of the highest hill and into the timber. Our troops came to support the gun, but were not needed.

The officers did not allow the soldiers to take full advantage of this victory and the result was that the Indians were pursued only a short distance. George Smith was killed in action and several were wounded, though none mortally. After the battle scores of dead horses covered the ground telling plainly of the deadly work of the bullets.

This fight took place between the tenth and fifteenth of July. Casualties among the Indians must have been great, though I never learned the number. I had followed the Gatling gun up the hill and so saw the whole fight very plainly.

THE NEXT contact with the whites was at Willow Springs near Pendleton, Oregon. With the death of their chief and leader, Egan, the Indians lost courage, and executing a flank movement commenced to retreat southward. We followed and came up with them a few days later on Lake Creek, which empties into the North Fork. Here the Indians made another and final stand and had they possessed the courage which accompanies success, they might have made us pay more dearly for victory.

This time they chose for their battleground a high table rock covering several acres and with nearly perpendicular sides. From its top they screamed defiance to the cavalry and scouts, who were under Colonel Forsythe. The trail over this high plateau led through a small gap which, by a handful of brave men, could easily be defended against hundreds. The scouts, led by Rube Robbins, were ambushed while attempting to gain the summit of this rock through the gap and as a result suffered the loss of one man killed and several wounded, among the latter being Robbins himself.

Kennedy, the man who was killed, was wounded in the arm and bled to death. I found him on the field and after giving him a drink of water from my canteen, went for the surgeon and informed him of Kennedy's condition. Then I went to look after another wounded man named Campbell. When the surgeon found Kennedy he was dead.

The cavalrymen were drawn up in line for a charge when Colonel Bernard came up to me and asked if I knew of any way to dislodge the redskins without great loss of life. I pointed to a high steep hill to the west, which overlooked the table rock, and told him if he could gain its summit, it would be an easy matter to take the Indians in the rear. The troopers ascended the hill in safety and soon dislodged the Indians and forced them to retreat.

This last defeat was too much for the warriors and soon after they divided into two bands, one going south by way of the Greenhorn Mountains and the other down the Dixie Range. The party which returned by way of the Dixie Range killed a Frenchman near Robbinsonville and Jimmie Vardeman on Elk Creek. The Indians kept in the mountains as much as possible, however, and destroyed little if any property.

The "war" was now at an end and as I could be of no further service to the army I helped to take Campbell, the wounded man, down Burnt River, after which I returned to my home at Susanville.

—Reprinted from *My Story of the Last Indian War in the Northwest* by Thomas Morgan.

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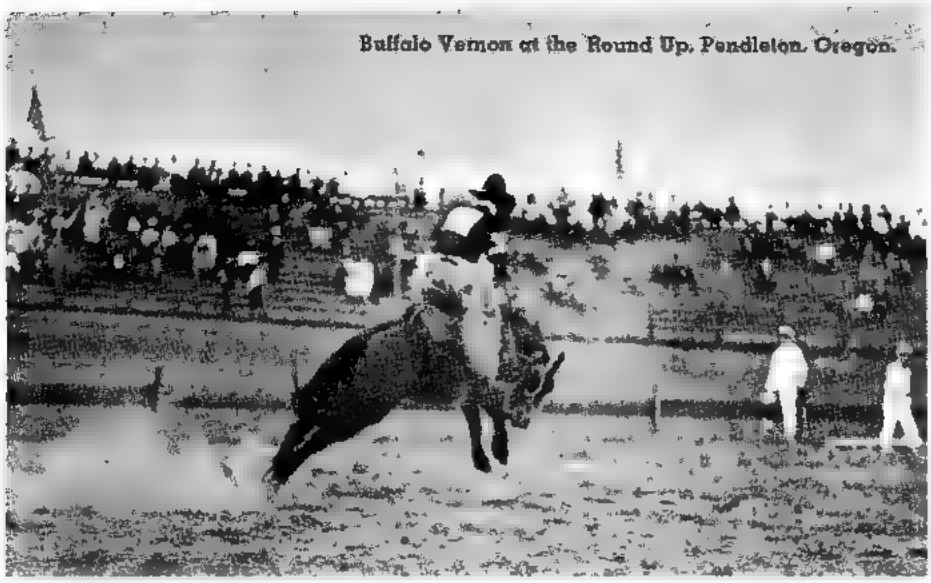

Buffalo Vernon at the Round Up, Pendleton, Oregon.

First King of the Bulldoggers

(Continued from page 23)

in the Southwest country, and because he had come from Buffalo, somebody nailed the moniker, "The Buffalo Kid," onto him. As the Kid grew up, the name became *Buffalo* Vernon, and variously, *Buff*, or *Doc* Vernon. The "Doc" part evolved because of his ability to care for sick and injured livestock.

ONE THING we have noticed in correspondence with dozens of persons, is that those people who knew him best always refer to him as *Buff*, not Buffalo Vernon. We ask our readers to remember this point, in the face of any controversy which may arise as a result of this article. And as *Buff*, he lived the final dozen years of his life in Nevada. While others called him Buffalo, and he even signed his name that way sometimes, still to his intimates he was *Buff*.

Buff hit the sawdust trail, in a manner of speaking, and traveled extensively over North America, Europe, and the Orient with many of the big time Wild West Shows. Among these were the Two Bills (Buffalo and Pawnee), 101 Ranch, Clarence Adams, The Young Buffalo Ranch, Bill Dickey Wild West Show, Kit Carson Wild West Show, and the Fred Askins Wild West Show. Some of these tours were not without their high spots —either tragic, humorous, or just plain heartwarming.

Buff Vernon was thrilled no end over giving a command performance before the King of Belgium. And his hometown friends and relatives were treated to an eye-popping exhibition of rope prowess and general showmanship when one of the big shows he was traveling with paid a visit to Buffalo.

That all was not glamor and gold was obvious when the Fred Askins Wild West Show toured Australia. The show folded while there, and Buff Vernon and co-author Milt Hinkle had to work their passage back to the U.S.A. on a freighter, shoveling coal to fire the boilers. It was quite a comedown for a couple of top hands, but preferable to remaining there to bust kangaroos. Buff always looked on it as a big joke.

In the early 1920s Buff seemingly "disappeared." He no longer showed up at any of the shows and most of his old-time intimates lost contact with him completely. The whys and wherefores are bandied about to this date. Every excuse in the world, from getting shot to pulling a bank robbery and getting a long sentence in some Big House, has been offered for his disappearance. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for Buff was not a larcenous man. Fight he might, if the occasion warranted it, or hoist a few during the noble experiment known as Prohibition, but nothing worse than that.

Two wounds—one to the body, and one to the pride—accounted for what later came to pass. In wrestling a maverick one day, Buff was horribly gored, causing a hernia wound which was never properly repaired, and which eventually led to his death some years later. With this affliction, he was done as a competitor, and even as a working cowboy —thus, the wound to his pride. A glamorous figure, by one sad twist of fate, suddenly was reduced to the status of an onlooker, so to speak. Like an opera star suddenly bereft of his voice, Buff couldn't, and wouldn't, take it.

He left the scenes of his triumphs behind. He wanted no pity from his colleagues, and most surely he evaded it. His break with rodeoing and with most of his friends was clean. With the exception of the few exhibitions heretofore mentioned, he stayed away from the game. But how wonderful he was, even when performing at, what to him, would have been about half-throttle.

Buff moved to Yerington, Nevada, about 1926, and remained there until his death on October 23, 1939. He worked for several years at the Bluestone Mine near the town. When the mine shut down, he divided his time between trapping and a second-hand business, with a bit of farming, cattle tending and veterinarian work thrown in. He endeared himself to grown-ups and children alike, and many a yarn he spun of the glory days gone by—but never in a spirit of braggadocio, always on a sound foundation of truth. We have checked out his stories with dozens of persons and have found that, if anything, he had a tendency to downgrade his accomplishments. Such was his nature, as all of those who knew him best, will attest. His sisters arranged for his body to be shipped to Buffalo, and he lies buried there in the Shisler family plot. So much for Buffalo Vernon himself.

We know that this story may be received with raised eyebrows in some quarters, but to the best of our knowledge, memory, and research, it is the 100 per cent true story of the First King of the Bulldoggers. We ask our readers to read the story, examine the pictures, and check out any of the sources listed below, for most of these people *knew* Buff Vernon, and will agree that this is his story.

To those who, in the light of some peculiar stories handed down through the years, may doubt what we say—may we remind you of how often Jesse James, John Wilkes Booth and a horde of others have—remarkably, from time to time—risen from the grave? Seemingly unmarked and unscathed and ready to boast of their bygone deeds, they have never been too convincing. That's just the way it is here.

We give our biggest thanks for help in the compilation of this article to Buffalo Vernon's sister, Mrs. Maude E. MacDonald, and to her son, Reynold J. MacDonald. We further acknowledge the interest and information supplied by the following, whose names in most cases are household words among the rapidly vanishing clan who pioneered the great game of rodeo and its twin, the Wild West Show either as competitors, promoters, or historians: M. F. "Pete" Peterson, husband of the late Lorena Trickey of bronc riding fame; Fay Ward; Mabel Strickland Woodward; L. H. Hamley; T. Joe Cahill; Goldie Griffith Cameron; Michael Harrison; Helen Clark; J. Jack O'Keefe; Jack Armstrong; Mildred Searcey; Glenn DeSpain; and Art Morgan.

Western Gun Collecting

(Continued from page 29)

shape. The biggest pistol was, naturally, the large Remington .44 cap-and-ball new model Army with a full eight inch barrel and bearing the original walnut grips.

The smaller gun of the lot, I have not yet shot, but it seems to be about .44 caliber and has two barrels, side by side. It is in suspiciously good condition for having been made about 1842, and it may be that the barrels unscrew for loading because there are tool or teeth marks on the muzzle ends. Some day that mystery will be solved. Does any reader have any information on this last gun? The serial number is sixty-seven, and it has Belgian proof marks. The long-barrel Colt Buntline shown with the older pistols is a modern twelve inch Buntline made recently. That one is a keeper!

You can start out with a trunk full of "trading stock" and end up with something different. Don't pass up pieces or accessories, or holsters either! It took me three passes one month to buy an entire "Peacemaker" that I really wanted. The little old lady was a sharper talker than I was, and sold me the holster first, then the grips, and finally, the gun! I decided she really wanted some one to talk to, and so she strung out the deal over three visits. We are good friends now, and I shoot coyotes for her when they bother the stock too much.

You can collect guns for a hobby, too. Get out and look. They are right under your nose. Pass the word around—buy them, clean them up, trade them off, and start all over again. It is lots of fun and you will be learning more about the true West every day. You may even find Pancho Villa's personal pistol. I have bought it three different times, from three different cowhands! Good luck, fellow gun collectors!

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Gold by the Bucketful

(Continued from page 51)

stage. They decided to drift, or tunnel.

No one is sure what made them drift in the particular direction they did. Someone may have given them some advice, as Dillar was a farm boy and the other fellows apparently lacked knowledge also or they wouldn't have gone ahead and staked below the Canyon where all the experienced miners told them their chances were nil.

Anyhow, Dillar and his partners got the required tools and started drifting and before they had gone twenty feet, they hit the richest piece of ground Cariboo gold miners had ever seen. It is reported that 102 pounds of gold were taken out in one night, working a four-man crew. Even at $20 an ounce (the price of gold at that time), it was nice money—and it was only the start.

Barkerville was booming. The dance halls and gambling joints were going full blast. Fortunes were being made and lost on the turn of a card or the spots on a set of dice. The roulette wheels called and, so it is told, Dillar's partners got looped in one of the Barkerville dives and lost their portion of the claim.

Bill Dillar was a different type. He had written his mother and sent her money from time to time, but the few letters he received from home complained of the fact that she never heard from him.

It had been almost two years since he had left the farm when Bill Dillar "cleaned up" and started on the long journey back to New York State. In those two years, his mother had fallen on real hard times.

THE DAY Dillar arrived home was like a scene from "East Lynne." A crowd was gathered at their farm. Furniture and equipment was sorted and stacked for auction. Dillar's mother sat in an old rocking chair, crying softly, while the auctioneer put item after item on the block.

But there was something strange about this auction. Local farmers and their wives who had come to take advantage of some bargains found themselves outbid on every piece of furniture and head of stock by a bearded stranger. Dillar had put on pounds and height in his two years of absence. Even his mother failed to recognize the tall, rugged looking character with the whiskers.

Finally the house and the farm were put on the block. Dillar let the bidding go on apace—then topped it with a bid that drew no competition. He paid for his purchases in gold, collected the deed—and dumped it with more gold into his mother's lap.

Eventually they sold the farm and moved to New York where Dillar became an alderman of that city. There are stories, too, that he later went West on another trip and built the Dillar Hotel in Seattle.

In an account about early British Columbia by Dr. W. W. Walkem, the following notation appears, taken from the diary of J. C. Bryant who held an adjacent claim to Dillar:

"I have already referred to the output of the Dillar claim, whose lines adjoined ours, when I said that it produced in a single day 102 pounds of gold. I would like to add that for weeks the Dillar claim declared $10,000 per share every Sunday. Bill Dillar weighed 240 pounds and he got more than his weight in gold out of his own claim. He also had a dog weighing 120 pounds and received that weight as well and how much more I cannot tell. The whole of the gold in the Dillar claim was taken out of 100 feet of ground."

The tale of his return home is authenticated in at least three diaries, and appears to be one of the few stories of the gold rush with a truly happy ending.

—From *Cariboo Yarns*, Copyright, Canada and U.S.A., 1962, by F. W. Lindsay.

"That's mighty big talk, Paleface!"

Centipede Tales

(Continued from page 17)

Frequently when reaching for a boll of cotton in cotton-picking season, my arm would contact a stinging nettle. Now I began to rub the centipede bite as I used to rub nettle stings in the cotton patch. At first I did not realize what had happened. My arm began to swell so that I knew something with a good deal of poison had bitten me. In a little time a kernel the size of a quail egg formed under my arm at the shoulder joint.

It was a mile to my closest neighbor and thirty-eight miles to the closest doctor; there I was alone in the mountains, at nine o'clock at night. As the Psalmist cried, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even unto His ears." The Lord took the pain and throbbing away instantly, and stopped the swelling and the enlargement of the kernel under my arm.

I worked on until twelve midnight as if nothing had happened, but the swelling was the same when I went to bed. I do not remember about the kernel. Next morning swelling and all had passed away, and I was normal except for an imprint of about two inches on my arm where the centipede had clinched the flesh with his feet.

My neighbor was an out-and-out atheist. He thought I was fine except on religion. On religion he considered me "nuts," to use his terminology. The next morning after I was bitten by the centipede I went to this neighbor's to get my mail. I showed him my arm and related to him the facts. He said that was a centipede bite "as sure as hell," but he did not understand my relief from pain.

There on the homestead, as elsewhere in the mountains, it was a common thing to find centipedes in cellars, around damp places, in crevices in rocks—wherever they can abide in seclusion.

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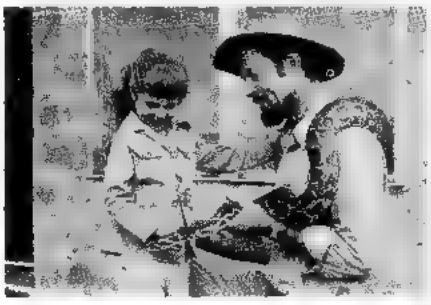

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Uinta Yarns

(Continued from page 53)

located. So the authorities wouldn't find it, he'd scratched it on the insten of his shoe. Ole helped him copy out the map, and together they deciphered it. It was shortly after that Turner disappeared. Ole said that it looked to him as though the map was right around Long's Park. No one ever knew whether Turner actually found the treasure or not. A man who was working for Solomon at the time also disappeared, and there was talk of foul play.

Ern Crosby has another story. He tells us that one morning Bill Riggs came over to his place at daybreak all excited, and rooted him out of bed. "Come on," he says, "get up. We're going up and find that buried treasure."

"Aw, hell," says Ern, "I don't believe there's any treasure there. Turner probably got it."

"No," says Bill, "I know right where it is. I had a dream last night, and I know the exact spot."

Well, Ern didn't have anything particular to do that day, so he went along. They got up in Dowd's Hole, and went along until they came to a little wash, and there was a dead pine sort of tipped over, with the brown needles on it.

"There," says Bill, "that's it. Just like it was in my dream."

So they got out their shovels and dug. Sure enough, they hadn't been at it more than a minute when the shovel hit something. They got it out, and it was an old shoe. Ern got a bit excited then, and they both started digging away.

In a minute they'd turned up a pair of old overalls. Now they were getting somewhere. They dug all around until the place looked like a plowed field, but they didn't find another sign of anything. And it was easy to see that the ground in other places hadn't ever been disturbed.

Finally Ern went back to the overalls and hunted through the pockets. "There's your treasure," he says to Bill, and held out fifteen cents!

—Reprinted from the book, *Our Strip of Land, A History of Daggett County, Utah.*

Good Company

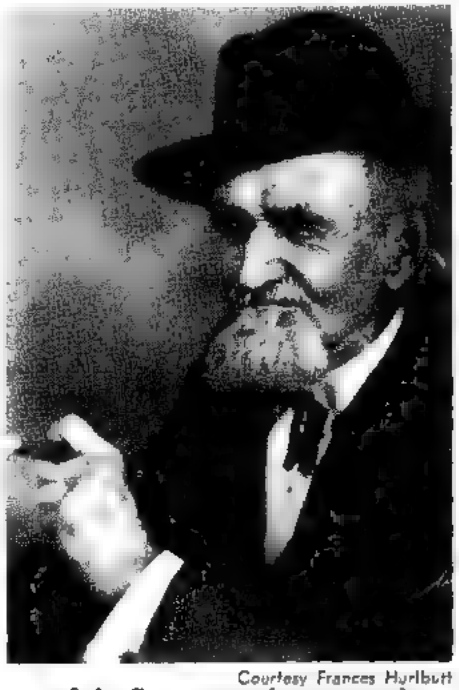
(Continued from page 55)

Arizona in the last days of April and the first of May had a healing strength in the air that seemed to wrap around us by day and night.

Sunday morning early we started for Casa Grande. The company took a stage at ten cents a mile. I rode a pony so I could delay on the way to see the Casa Grande ruins—Casa Grande Montezuma as it was called then. There were great walls of adobe, finished inside by some kind of smooth glazing. Broken pieces of crockery were yet above the ground. This has since become a national monument with a history.

It was late in the day when I trotted into Casa Grande. After engaging the little place we had to play in, I lost no time meeting Major Pauline Cushman. Years before in Zanesville I had read her book, *Spy of the Cumberland*, and recognized her from the steel engraving in the book. She was standing on the hotel porch.

At this time she was fifty-four, tall, her dark, wavy, shoulder-length hair streaked with gray. Her eyes gave me the impression of firmness. I told her I had read her book. She admitted her great mistake in disobeying orders not to carry maps or papers, told me how



Courtesy Frances Hurlbutt
Luke Cosgrave, a character study

General Bragg's men captured her and that she was ordered hanged in two weeks. Later she was able to give valuable information when the victorious Union troops found her before the execution. She was received and honored by President Lincoln and went on an interesting lecture tour.

She said she liked our spirit because we had an objective, and if we could keep the troupe together we might get to California and even start a tour. So she invited the ladies of Casa Grande to a tea to meet Miss Marcells, who did her Arch Street Theatre number in a pleasing way.

Major Cushman sold nearly fifty tickets, gave us a good example of quiet, constructive force, and filled our younger members with a keen anticipation of the fine tour we would make in the great state of California.

In the very early Nineties, the San Francisco papers carried a story of Pauline Cushman's death in that city by suicide. The Grand Army of the Republic buried her in their own plot of ground with honors belonging to her rank.

We decided to make Los Angeles our next base of operations since the weather was now very warm and we did not plan on making another tour until fall. Miss Marcells, her son and daughter, were to get to the city, find living quarters and leave the address at the post office. Will Eastman and I remained a few days in Yuma and were able to pick up a cut-rate ticket. If "all's well that ends well," then our tour falls into that category.

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Truly Western

(continued from page 50)

e that a couple of fellows magazines to her store said n regard to the rack. She told "I sell 'em and I'll put 'em where I please!" Your magazines are gone in one day.

As a motion picture stunt man, I see a lot of the present-day TV and movieland West, so my thanks go out to you and your staff for the true facts on how it really was. Quite different, huh? Would you please explain to me why the newsstands get so few of your publications?—Jimmy Roy, 1272 Washington, Apt. 9, Denver, Colorado.

Editor's Note: This is the kind of letter that makes us want to laugh and want to cry. First, the bawling: nobody knows better than we do that getting the magazines from our printing plant onto the stands across the country apparently is more baffling than what they're trying to work out at Cape Canaveral! We print magazines until they're coming out our ears and the paper bill looks like we had used up a whole stand of timber and *still* we get complaints of "No magazines in my town." However, there's a ray of hope —we have a very good distributor who promises to get them to you, and in good quantity, in the very near future. Ask your individual newsdealers to request additional copies of TW and FT and let *us* know the names of the stands that at present do not get any copies at all. And especially, if you find a stand where we're buried six feet under with a lily in our hand, get us back up in the land of the living! A call to your *wholesaler* (the man who distributes to all the newsstands) is best of all. Get his name from your newsdealer.

Now to the part of the letter that made us happy: what in the world can you say to somebody as nice as Mr. Roy? Here he has gone and built us our own bloomin' rack and we didn't even buy the nails! Not only that but he picked out a spot that's under the management of a woman with a mind of her own. Heck fire, you can't hardly beat a combination like that —see you around next month!

Every Man to His Own Taste

Dear Sir:

After reading through the April 1963 TRUE WEST, (for about the third time), I decided to send in my two bits worth. I'm referring to the letters about eating dogs in "Truly Western."

In 1933, when I was about nine years old, my mom, dad and two younger brothers and I went over to Apache, Oklahoma, about fifteen miles from where we lived. Several Indian tribes were having a very large powwow. Mother was very mad at my dad this evening as he was drinking a little too much, so when we got to the powwow, Dad got out and we stayed in the car.

He was gone for a spell and came back with a piece of cooked meat saying it was buffalo meat. He said, "Here, Bill, this is for you." My mother was even madder then, because he didn't bring the other boys a piece.

I ate it with great relish and said I wished I had more. Dad began to laugh and laugh and finally even Mom got to laughing. Dad said, "Bill, since you are so crazy about dogs, I thought I'd bring you a piece of dog meat." My mother couldn't believe it was true and insisted that we all walk over to where Dad had got it. Sure enough, they were just bringing another whole dog off the fire, done to perfection.

Mom got sick and we left very soon and went home. She was awful put out with my father.

Ten years later I was living over in eastern Oklahoma. I had been told by several guys that an Indian out in the country between Cushing and Drumright would buy dogs for $1.00 apiece. I had about sixty Greyhounds and Staghounds at the time, and hunted jackrabbits and coyotes regularly.

One day I was out on the same section of land, hunting with four Greyhounds, when I got real thirsty and went over to the Indian's for a drink of water. While I was there a man drove up with six dogs in his car. The Indian gave him $6.00 and unloaded the dogs in a shed. After the guy left, he told me they ate one or two dogs a week. Out behind that old shed you never saw so much dog hair, bones and skins in your life.

At the time, I bought old goats and sheep and dressed them for my dog food. My wife thought I was more cruel than he. So—to each his own!—Bill Thornton, 1280 Crescent Heights, Apt. 1, Hollywood 46, California.

We Can't Get By With Nuthin'!

Howdy!

I have been reading your magazines for a long time and the only thing I ever saw wrong was the name of the man who was shot by Bob Dalton when they were in Coffeyville. This man ran from the rear of Boswell's hardware store and was the first one killed. The author called him Lucian Baldwin but his first name is really "Lucius." He was named for my grandfather and was my dad's second cousin. My grandfather was at one time a city marshal in a small Kansas town about the time much of the history of Kansas was being written.—Dewey Baldwin, P. O. Box 633, Bastrop, Texas.

Let's Help Out!

Dear Mr. Small:

I am a Cornishman and have enjoyed reading stories in your back issues which dealt with Cornish mines in America. During the tin-mining slump in Cornwall, your country offered work to many hundreds of our people and I was wondering if any books have been written on the subject.

During my spare time I run a Scout Troop at a school for mentally handicapped children. I am trying to get some Indian articles to put in our Scout Den. Such items are impossible to purchase in England so if any of your readers could possibly send me any pieces of Indian work, I would be glad to send an English gift in return.—John Jones, "Trevean" 42, Malabar Road, Highertown, Truro, Cornwall, England.

Editor's Note: We ran a story on the Cousin Jacks in a recent issue of TRUE WEST (April). Those Cornishmen were real characters!

An Old Friend Gone

Dear Editor:

I think you and your readers should know that Byron Stork (Rawhide Shorty) died recently in Spokane, Washington, at the age of eighty-four. He was a cowboy artist and author and I have read his stories in your magazines. Shorty had quite a career as a cowboy and lumberjack in Montana and Washington but didn't write much until he was in his sixties. They tell me he turned out around 400 western paintings, too.

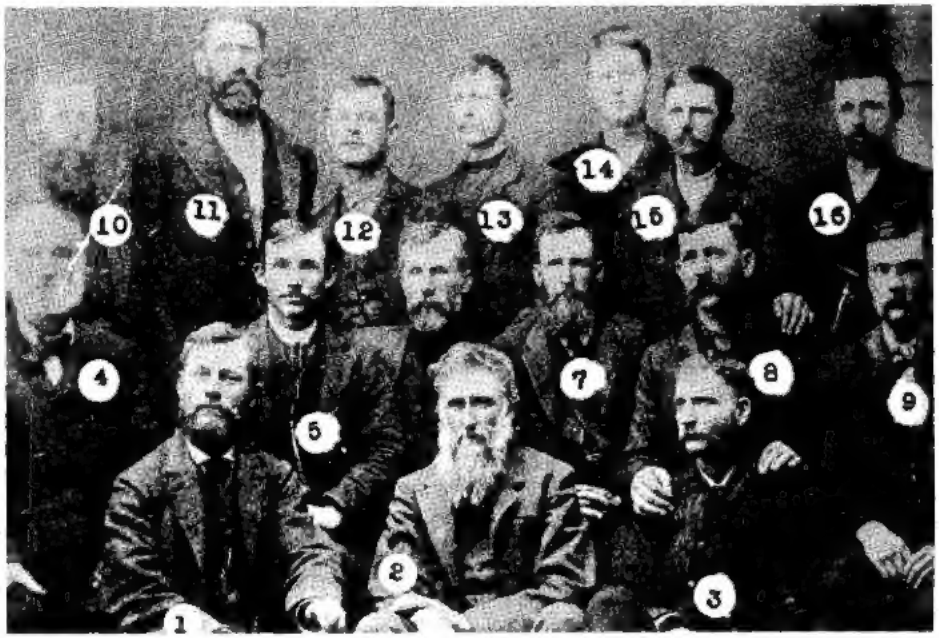
I am one of your loyal readers.—R. J. Raymond, Sacramento, California.

Editor's Note: It's the worst kind of bad news when we lose an old-timer like Shorty. And in today's mail was a notice about Doughbelly Price's death. We are mighty proud that both of these men have had articles in WESTERN PUBLICATIONS.

Sixteen Mystery Men

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing a picture of some gentlemen I believe were old-timers in Dodge City. I have been unable to find anyone who could identify them, although it has been suggested that No. 2 might be P. G. Reynolds; No. 4, R. L. Sittler; and No. 9, Dick Robinson. I think I will have to give up unless some readers of your fine magazines can come to the rescue. The picture is nearly worthless without this information. It is one of the few in my Dodge City collection that has me stumped.—Robert E. Eagan, Box 865, Dodge City, Kansas.



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